

Effective Engagement: building relationships
with community and other stakeholders

Book 1 an introduction to engagement



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Version 3

Acknowledgments

This set of three books builds on the work undertaken to develop versions 1 and 2 of *Effective community engagement: workbook and tools*, commencing in 2002 and published in 2004. The contributors to previous versions are acknowledged and this body of work has been the foundation for continuous improvement in the practice of engaging communities and other stakeholders.

Since then, there have been significant policy shifts, organisational changes and developments in the field. This latest version, *Effective engagement: building relationships with community and other stakeholders*, draws on the recent research, learning and experiences of a range of practitioners. It also reflects the need for congruence between engagement, organisational capability and integration to build resilient relationships, resulting in a more holistic approach to engagement.

Many people from diverse backgrounds and disciplines have contributed to the discussion, thinking and testing of the concepts, models and practices in these three books, and the associated website. In particular, we would like to acknowledge those people who have provided leadership, vision and input during the development of this resource.

Workbook Project Manager Lyneve Whiting and **Editor** Peter Riches led the development, ensuring rigour, establishing relationships and managing the integration of content to ensure relevance to a wide range of organisations and the communities with whom they work.

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Foreword

Effective engagement: building relationships with community and other stakeholders is a practical planning guide that captures and shares information about tools widely used in engagement activities.

Originally launched in March 2004 to assist the Department of Sustainability and Environment (DSE) and the Department of Primary Industries (DPI) to build organisational capabilities in effective engagement, the publication has found its way all around Australia, ranging from local government to the not-for-profit sector to ambulance services.

I am proud to say the previous version of the publication was recognised in the Victorian Public Sector People Management Awards in the Managing Ethically section for its excellence. So it is with great interest that I note the continuous improvement and the sharing of learning that is taking place.

The Victorian Government, through its Growing Victoria Together (GVT) policy, is committed to working closely with Victorian communities to capture diversity of opinion and give more Victorians the opportunity to be heard on issues that matter to them.

This requires better access to decision-making processes. DSE is therefore committed to seeing stakeholder and community engagement embedded in policy and project work.

DSE's portfolio is complex and the range of views and opinions held in the community can be diverse and polarised. In this challenging environment, it is important that staff have access to engagement methodologies and relationship-building tools.

In keeping with DSE's Capability Framework and our commitment to building organisational capacity, this publication includes an extensive toolkit to assist staff design and implement engagement activities.

You will see changes that reflect the feedback from staff as well as new information from practitioners, including a range of case studies and samples of practical community engagement plans. To increase the reach of this publication, it is also now available on the web.

To ensure that DSE is well placed to deliver on the Victorian Government's agenda, we will need to work in an inclusive way with the Victorian community. This will ensure that the policy, program or project we deliver has considered the diversity of opinion and is well placed to gain understanding and support in the community.

This workbook is for all staff. I encourage you to make full use of it as we work with communities, other government and non-government agencies to achieve better outcomes for Victoria.



Lyndsay Neilson
Secretary

Department of Sustainability
and Environment



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Introduction

1.1 Changing the Way Government Works – the Victorian Government Commitment

The Victorian Government is committed to open, accountable democracy. The Premier, the Hon. Steve Bracks, has said that genuinely democratic governments are required to place greater emphasis on establishing a true democratic partnership between the people and their institutions. These views are outlined in *Growing Victoria Together: a vision for Victoria to 2010 and beyond*. It states that a vibrant democracy is achieved through greater public participation and more accountable government. One of GVT's measures of success is that more Victorians from all backgrounds are given the opportunity to have a say on issues that matter to them.¹

This requires a commitment to greater flexibility and innovation in, and by government.

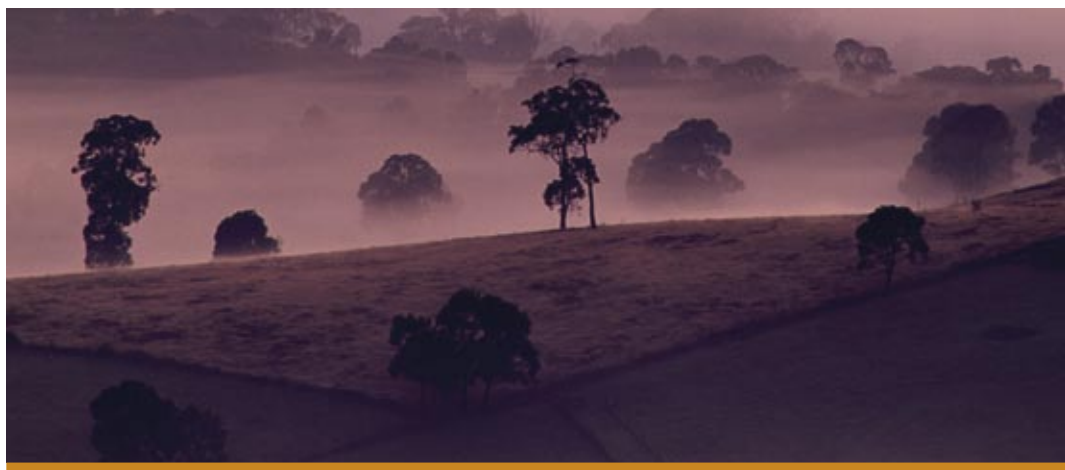
One of the challenges ahead is for a greater diversity of Victorians to be more actively involved in decision-making. This can be achieved through appropriate engagement to increase participation in decisions that affect Victorians and their local community from an environmental, social, economic and cultural perspective.

For government, the challenge is to extend the capacity to listen closely to interest groups, as well as to those who may be under represented in current decision-making. Longer term results may be enhanced by including a diversity of views from a range of interests. Another challenge for government is to support communities to build their capacity to more actively participate in development of our shared future. To this end, government is also making a commitment to community strengthening, something that is explored further in section 3.5.

The Victorian social policy document *A Fairer Victoria: creating opportunity and addressing disadvantage* provides a framework for addressing disadvantage and lack of opportunity. It is one of the many government mechanisms to foster the strengthening of communities, particularly those groups who have traditionally been less involved in decisions affecting their local and broader community.²

Government is committed to a future in which all Victorians are living sustainably within their natural and built environments. In addition to economic and social policy directions, *Our Water Our Future* action plan³ is another demonstration of the important relationship between the environment and people. Many contributors are needed to work towards such a complex, multi-dimensional aim. Productive and effective relationships spanning the diversity of community and the breadth of Victorian Government departments are needed for the Victorian community to achieve its sustainability goals.

This journey will require a commitment from staff and managers, a willingness to challenge current practices, and a desire to learn from each other and listen to a diversity of opinions, to ensure Victorians have the opportunity to be heard on issues that matter to them.



¹ State Government of Victoria (2005) *Growing Victoria Together: a vision for Victoria to 2010 and beyond*, State Government of Victoria, Melbourne

² State Government of Victoria (2005) *A Fairer Victoria: creating opportunity and addressing disadvantage*, State Government of Victoria, Melbourne

³ State Government of Victoria (2005) *Our Water Our Future* action plan, State Government of Victoria, Melbourne

1.2 Victoria's Diversity

Understanding the diversity and dynamism of the Australian and Victorian population is fundamental for developing the capability to engage the community in the delivery of its vision for sustainability. An ageing population, increased cultural diversity, lower birth rates, higher education rates, significant change in religious affiliations and increased participation of women in labour markets – coupled with the ongoing, rapid rate of technological change – present challenges and opportunities for decision-makers.

It is important to be aware that there will be diversity within the commonly used community or social categories. For example, not all men will share the same view on an issue and neither will all Muslim women. In addition, any individual may be described by more than one of these categories; for example, a female may be young, from Sudan and have a physical disability.

The following snapshot of information from the Australian Bureau of Statistics 2001 Census illustrates the diversity of Victorian communities and highlights the need for effective engagement by government.

Total population of Victoria

- 4,612,097.

Indigenous Australians

- 0.6% of the total Victorian population (25,078) are Indigenous Australians.
- 52% live outside of the Melbourne metropolitan area compared with 27% of the non-Indigenous population.
- 57% are under 25 years of age compared with 34% for the total population.
- 2.9% are over 65 compared with 12.6% for the total population.

Birthplace

- 24% of Victorians (1,083,048) were born overseas in 233 different countries.
- 44% of Victorians were either born overseas or have at least one parent born overseas.
- 72% of those born overseas were born in non-English speaking countries.

Religion

- 72% of Victorians follow 116 different religions.

Languages spoken

- 21% of Victorians speak a language other than English at home, comprising 180 different languages and dialects.

Young people

- 34% of the population is under 25.
- 19% of Victorians (932,000) are between the ages of 12-25.
- 74% of all young Victorians live in metropolitan Melbourne.

Seniors

- The population is ageing. Currently, 17% of the population is 60 years of age or over. This will grow to nearly 25% in 2021.
- The number of seniors in rural Victoria will grow twice as rapidly as those in metropolitan areas in the next 20 years.

Gender

- 51% (2,365,889) of Victorians are female and 49% (2,246,208) are male.
- Women comprise 54.3% of Victorians with Bachelor degrees, and 38.5% of Victorians with postgraduate degrees.
- There were 55,100 female apprentices and trainees in training as of 31 March 2004, comprising 41.1% of the total number of apprentices and trainees.
- Victorian women's average weekly earnings are 20% lower than those of Victorian men.

Disability

- 18.7% of Victorian women and 17.2% of Victorian men (395,300) have some form of disability that is considered profound, severe, moderate or mild.
- There are an estimated 150,000 people with severe or profound disabilities in Victoria.

Using the Effective Engagement kit

2.1 Purpose

This kit comprises three books, *Book 1: an introduction to engagement*, *Book 2: the engagement planning workbook* and *Book 3: the engagement toolkit*, plus a CD-ROM. The purpose of the kit is to provide you with the necessary information and resources to plan the community engagement component of a project – from design and delivery through to evaluation and incorporation of learning.

This is the third edition of this publication. Its development provided the opportunity to build on the work undertaken in previous editions as well as to capture and share the experiences and learning of staff across the organisation and beyond.

- Book 1 outlines the principles and importance of effective engagement and sets out a model for developing best-practice engagement activities with communities and other stakeholders.
- Book 2 is a practical guide that takes you step-by-step through an engagement planning process using an 'evidence-based' approach. This book also provides a number of sample engagement planning documents and engagement case studies.
- Book 3 is a listing of various engagement tools with details of their purpose, use and requirements.

Creating an Engagement Plan is a fluid and circular process. There is no 'right way' to approach community engagement. Every situation and circumstance is different and requires a tailored approach to enable appropriate participation. This kit cannot provide a proven formula for success but offers an exploration of the theory of engagement, guidance in planning and a number of tools that may be useful.



2.2 Who Is It For?

While this kit has been designed for DSE staff in a variety of roles – ranging from policy, research, statutory, project and service-focused roles – it is a valuable tool for all practitioners committed to engaging the community and other stakeholders.

These books will be of interest to anyone planning a project with diverse stakeholder groups, where managing group dynamics and facilitating effective participation is crucial to achieving a successful project outcome.

This kit will also be useful for DSE and other government staff in statutory roles. While the form, timing and method of engagement may be set out in an Act or Regulation, the theory and principles as set out in these books can be applied to a variety of situations; from preparation of notice requirements through to holding public information sessions.

2.3 Feedback

This publication is an evolving document developed in consultation with DSE and partner agencies for staff and other users. The relevance and completeness of the three books is the responsibility of the people who use it. Feedback on its usefulness, and any ideas for amendments or inclusions such as new theory, your experience in the form of a case study or additions to the toolkit, are central to its success.

A feedback form is included in Appendix E for your consideration.



What is community engagement?

3.1 Defining Community Engagement

Whenever a group of practitioners gather to discuss 'what is engagement,' a discussion about diversity of terminology usually emerges. Depending on the situation in which you are working, 'engagement' can cover consultation, extension, communication, education, public participation, participative democracy or working in partnership.

For our purposes, 'engagement' is used as a generic, inclusive term to describe the broad range of interactions between people. It can include a variety of approaches, such as one-way communication or information delivery, consultation, involvement and collaboration in decision-making, and empowered action in informal groups or formal partnerships.

The word 'community' is also a very broad term used to define groups of people; whether they are stakeholders, interest groups, citizen groups, etc. A community may be a geographic location (community of place), a community of similar interest (community of practice), or a community of affiliation or identity (such as industry or sporting club).

'Community engagement' is therefore a planned process with the specific purpose of working with identified groups of people, whether they are connected by geographic location, special interest or affiliation, to address issues affecting their well-being.⁴ Linking the term 'community' to 'engagement' serves to broaden the scope, shifting the focus from the individual to the collective, with associated implications for inclusiveness, to ensure consideration is given to the diversity that exists within any community.

Cavaye extends this definition as it specifically relates to the role of government, noting community engagement "... is the mutual communication and deliberation that occurs between government and citizens."⁵

Community engagement can take many forms and covers a broad range of activities. Some examples of community engagement undertaken by government practitioners include:

- **Informing** the community of policy directions of the government.
- **Consulting** the community as part of a process to develop government policy, or build community awareness and understanding.
- **Involving** the community through a range of mechanisms to ensure that issues and concerns are understood and considered as part of the decision-making process.
- **Collaborating** with the community by developing partnerships to formulate options and provide recommendations.
- **Empowering** the community to make decisions and to implement and manage change.



⁴ Queensland Department of Emergency Services (2001) *Charter for community engagement*, Community Engagement Unit, Strategic and Executive Services, Queensland Department of Emergency Services

⁵ Cavaye, Dr. J (2001) 'Community engagement framework project: scoping and review paper', Cavaye Community Development/ CEO Committee on Land Resources, Queensland, citing OECD (2001) 'Engaging Citizens in policy-making: information, consultation and public participation', *PUMA Policy brief No 10*, July 2001, Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development

3.2 Benefits of Successful Engagement

Effective engagement is a vehicle that can be used to build more resilient relationships with community. It can lead to the identification of mechanisms for building a community's strength and its ability to join with government and other stakeholders in dealing with complex issues and change.

The following is a summary of the benefits of successful engagement for both government and stakeholders.



For government:

- Community input can improve the quality of policy being developed, making it more practical and relevant.
- Community input can ensure services are delivered in a more effective and efficient way for that community.
- Engaging with communities is a way for government to check the health of the relationship face-to-face. It can also explore ways in which government and community could work more closely on issues of concern to the community.
- Engaging with communities is an opportunity for government to check its reputation and status. Asking the community how the organisation is meeting local needs could be a positive or at least informative engagement exercise.
- Early notice of emerging issues puts government in a better position to deal with those issues in a proactive way, instead of reacting as anger and conflict arise.
- Good engagement enhances the reputation of the government as open, accountable and willing to listen.

For stakeholders and communities:

- With purposeful and well-planned engagement, there will be opportunities for a diversity of voices to be heard on issues that matter to people.
- Communities can expect government to meet certain standards of engagement and give feedback on government's ability to meet those standards.
- Communities are able to identify priorities for themselves.
- There may be more ownership of solutions to current problems or building plans for the future so that the community shares in decision-making and has a higher level of responsibility for creating that future.
- Engagement can foster a sense of belonging to community and considerable benefits from working together on behalf of the community.
- Individuals may become empowered and proactive with regard to issues that affect them.

3.3 Principles of Engagement

Broad principles underpin engagement and a practical knowledge and adaptation of these will increase the effectiveness of your engagement activities. In a review of existing literature and theory, Petts and Leach⁶ developed a list of engagement principles which includes:

- a need for clarity of objectives, and of legal, linked and seamless processes
- consensus on agenda, procedures and effectiveness
- representativeness and inclusiveness
- deliberation
- capability and social learning
- decision responsiveness
- transparency and enhancement of trust.

Additional principles that apply to the relationship between stakeholders and the organisation implementing the engagement are:

- A commitment to reciprocity that includes stating what you require of the community, and delivery of what you will provide in exchange. Establish what you are promising as part of the engagement process. This could include provision of information or feedback on how contributions have influenced decisions, through to implementation of stakeholder decisions.
- Building genuine relationships with community and other stakeholders.
- Valuing the opportunities diversity has to offer.

Brown and Isaacs⁷ have developed the Six 'C's model as a set of basic principles to guide any engagement planning process.

The Six 'C's of Successful Community Engagement	
Capability	The members are capable of dialogue.
Commitment	Mutual benefit beyond self interest.
Contribution	Members volunteer and there is an environment that encourages members to 'have a go' or take responsibility/risks.
Continuity	Members share or rotate roles and, as members move on, there is a transition process that sustains and maintains the community corporate memory.
Collaboration	Reliable interdependence. A clear vision with members operating in an environment of sharing and trust.
Conscience	Embody or invoke guiding principles/ethics of service, trust and respect that are expressed in the actions of the community.

Note: the six Cs may be seen as targets or filters to measure the quality of the functioning of the community.

⁶ Petts, J & Leach, B (2000) 'Evaluating methods for public participation: a literature review', R & D technical report, E135, Environment Agency, Bristol

⁷ Brown, J & Isaacs, D (1994) 'Merging the best of two worlds the core processes of organisations as communities' in P Senge, A Kleiner, C Roberts, R Ross & B Smith (eds.) *The fifth discipline fieldbook: strategies and tools for building a learning organization*, Doubleday/Currency Publications

3.4 Participatory Engagement

Governments, agencies and organisations have relied on forms of community and stakeholder participation for many years. Participation is used to describe the activities of steering committees and reference groups, which provide direction, guidance and community representation. In addition, participation is an essential part of extension, education and other learning activities that encourage people to adopt new technologies and share experiences.

Engagement that is participatory often results in community and other stakeholders having ownership of a direction, course of action or decision, and its implementation.

The greater the degree of decision-making, the higher the level of ownership of the decision and, consequently, the greater the likelihood of a positive project outcome.

Therefore it is important to consider the implications of your proposed level of participation when designing your engagement approach. The key message for designing engagement processes is to avoid promising a level of participation and power that is never intended to be given, or designing processes that claim to be empowering, but merely offer 'token' levels of participation.

Pretty and Hine⁸ have developed a typology of 'participation' to differentiate actions according to the level of power agencies wish to devolve to participants in determining outcomes and actions.

In determining the level of participation, it is necessary to first identify the purpose of the engagement. This publication adopts the International Association of Public Participation (IAP2) Public Participation Spectrum (see section 4.3.1) as a transparent model for determining the most suitable types of engagement to match the purpose and to manage more effectively the dilemmas and trade-offs regarding participation.

Typology of Participation	
Typology	Characteristics of each type
Manipulative participation	Participation is simply pretence, with 'people's' representatives on official boards but who are not elected and have no power.
Passive participation	People participate by being told what has been decided or has already happened. It involves unilateral announcements by an administration or project management without listening to people's responses. The information shared belongs only to external professionals.
Participation by consultation	People participate by being consulted, and external people listen to views. These external professionals define both problems and solutions, and may modify these in light of the people's responses. Such a consultative process does not concede any share in decision-making, and professionals are under no obligation to take on board people's views.
Participation for material incentives	People participate by providing resources, for example labour, in return for food, cash or other material incentives. Much on-farm research falls into this category, as farmers provide their land but are not involved in the experimentation or the process of learning. It is very common to see this called participation. People have no stake in prolonging activities when the incentives run out.
Functional participation	People participate by forming groups to meet predetermined objectives related to the project, which can involve the development or promotion of externally initiated social organisation. Such involvement does not tend to be at early stages of project cycles or planning, but rather after major decisions have been made. These institutions tend to be dependent on external initiators and facilitators, but may become self-dependent.
Interactive participation	People participate in joint analysis, which leads to action plans and formation of new local institutions or the strengthening of existing ones. It tends to involve interdisciplinary methodologies that seek multiple perspectives and make use of systematic and structured learning processes. These groups take control over local decisions, and so people have a stake in maintaining structures or practices.
Self-mobilisation	People participate by taking initiatives independently of external institutions to change systems. They develop contacts with external institutions for the resources and technical advice they need, but retain control over how resources are used. Such self-initiated mobilisation and collective action may or may not challenge existing inequitable distribution of wealth and power.

⁸ Pretty, J & Hine, R (1999) *Participatory appraisal for community assessment*, Centre for Environment and Society, University of Essex

3.5 Related Concepts

There is a large body of literature on the subject of community engagement with broad agreement on the basic concepts, principles and good practice approaches. This theoretical body provides the foundation for the guidelines and processes of community engagement outlined in the three books of this kit. The following table provides a brief exploration of some concepts closely related to community engagement.

Recommendations for further reading are provided in Appendix B.



Community Engagement Related Concepts	
Active listening	<p>Sometimes known as empathetic listening, active listening is where an individual confirms they have heard and understood by paraphrasing the information back to the speaker.</p> <p>Active listening can be applied in many situations involving the engagement of others, including facilitation and consultation processes used in community engagement. It is used to demonstrate the information has been received and understood, whether it is in an individual conversation, a survey or workshop.</p>
Appreciative inquiry	<p>Appreciative inquiry rejects the more traditional 'problem-focussed' approach and instead seeks to identify what is working well or opportunities for positive change.</p> <p>Appreciative inquiry as an engagement approach aims to encourage imagination, innovation and flexibility with stakeholder groups and build on the positives that already exist (e.g. collecting good news stories, visioning for a sustainable future).</p>
Community profiling	<p>As a stakeholder scoping tool, community profiling is a means to achieve an increased understanding of the diversity of the community. The purpose of undertaking a stakeholder profiling exercise is to ensure inclusiveness and therefore a better engagement process and outcome.</p> <p>A community of concern may be defined by geography (place), identity (industry or affiliation) or interest. The type and level of documentation collected when undertaking a profile is determined by the purpose and complexity of the engagement.</p> <p>Participatory profiling is where the community is actively involved in the research, resulting in the community having greater participation in determining an appropriate course of action.</p>
Community strengthening	<p>The basic premise of community strengthening is that valuable knowledge and ideas are readily available within communities, and the role of government is to develop mechanisms for sharing this knowledge.</p> <p>Community strengthening helps to mobilise community skills, expand networks, harness energy and resources and apply them in ways that achieve collaborative and positive social change.</p>
Systems thinking	<p>A systems approach encourages the exploration of the relationships between social, environmental and economic interactions. This approach resists breaking a problem into its component parts for detailed examination. By examining the links and interrelationships of the whole system, patterns and themes emerge that offer insights and new meaning to the initial problem.</p> <p>In a community engagement context, encouraging a diversity of views can lead to a new understanding of the situation and the identification of opportunities for action that may not have otherwise occurred.⁹</p>

⁹ Bawden, R & Macadam, R (1991) in Bawden, R (1995) *Systemic development: a learning approach to change*, Centre for Systemic Development, UWS, Hawkesbury

Planning & managing engagement

Book 2: the engagement planning workbook provides a step-by-step process for developing an Engagement Plan. In the following section, we address some of the broader considerations in planning and managing effective engagement, and explore a model for matching the type of engagement to your purpose.

4.1 Initial Considerations

Including an explicit community engagement component within your overall project can sometimes be the difference between project success or failure. How you approach the development of an Engagement Plan for your project will be dependent on the size of the project, the level of complexity and the number of staff involved. For medium to large projects, it is recommended you treat community engagement as a separate, discrete project component. Accordingly, we recommend you develop a specific Engagement Plan for working with the various project stakeholders.

DSE staff can arrange for a Project Office facilitator to run a scoping workshop to help develop the engagement component of their overall project implementation plan.

4.1.1 Forming a Project Team

Team support and mentoring is an important component of the engagement process. While the nature of a project sometimes requires people to work on their own, there are a number of advantages in developing the Engagement Plan within a team, such as:

- It allows for the inclusion of a depth and breadth of views, ensuring diversity is built into the planning process.
- The workload and the learning opportunities can be distributed more evenly. If the purpose of the engagement is to encourage action and change, the people directly involved in the process are more likely to move with the change.

Engagement team members may come from within your existing project team, or they may be external, depending on the skills required. The composition of the project team may also change throughout the development and implementation of the Engagement Plan. The team composition will reflect the different tasks and skill sets required at each step of the engagement process.

Depending on the dimensions of your Engagement Plan, the following criteria may assist in developing a project team for the engagement component of your project:

- the range of experience and skills (e.g. local knowledge, familiarity with community engagement processes, existing relationships with stakeholders)
- the physical location of team members
- the level of diversity within the team (internal and external to your overall project).

4.1.2 Managing Risk

Risks associated with community engagement can be classified as either:

- risks you are trying to address by conducting the engagement, or
- risks that could prevent you from achieving the objectives of your engagement.

Business units or project teams that have deliverables for which they are responsible often cite the community as one of their sources of risk. This risk can be related to either the community not doing something that is required to achieve the desired outcome, or the community doing something that prevents the project team from achieving their objectives (e.g. blockades). Engaging the key project stakeholders is often a strategy used to mitigate this risk.

If risk mitigation is your goal for conducting the engagement, this should be clearly stated up front. You also need to be careful that your engagement is actually going to reduce the likelihood of the risk eventuating. By not conducting the engagement properly, you could increase the risk instead of mitigating it.

Further information and specific processes to manage risk in a community engagement can be found in the 'Risk Management' section of *Book 2: the engagement planning workbook*.

4.1.3 Occupational Health and Safety

The health and safety of employees, volunteers, contractors and community members is critical to any engagement activity, event and program. Risks to health and safety need to be identified in the planning stage, and a risk control plan developed, implemented and monitored.

Often the engagement component of your project will require you to bring stakeholders together in public places (e.g. local hall, park). In such instances, it is recommended you first undertake a safety audit of the site to identify local hazards and risks. A site safety audit is used to record each hazard or risk and then outlines the proposed action to control these. This can include simple things such as making sure water is available for all participants. The process should also cover disability (e.g. mobility, sight, hearing), gender and specific cultural requirements.

All organisations participating in the project are advised to meet regularly during the course of the engagement to ensure all OH&S controls are being implemented within the agreed timelines.

Where OH&S issues are identified during the course of the engagement, the impact of these hazards or risks should be assessed. If they are considered to be high risk, activities should cease until effective controls are implemented.

DSE staff are required to complete a Job Safety Analysis (JSA) to identify and assess occupational health and safety risks associated with undertaking work duties within the workplace. This procedure is designed to ensure DSE maintains a safe and healthy workplace for all its employees, contractors and visitors.

The JSA includes a Site Safety Survey which is an onsite check of the job environment, to be used when conducting activities at non-DSE locations. This also applies to activities involving DSE staff being run by other organisations. DSE requires that a level equal to or higher than DSE's own OH&S and risk management practices be followed by staff, contractors and volunteers of the non-DSE organisation.

DSE staff should refer to the 'Policies & Procedures' section of the organisation's intranet for the latest versions of the Job Safety Analysis and Site Safety Survey.

Non-DSE staff are advised they need to complete similar documentation to ensure they meet public liability responsibilities, and should refer to their own organisation's OH&S and risk management policies and procedures.

4.2 Stakeholders in the Project

4.2.1 Stakeholder Identification

Stakeholder identification and analysis is integral to the engagement planning process. By understanding and managing the relationship between stakeholders (including community members) you increase the likelihood of achieving your desired overall project outcome. Conversely, failure to appreciate the dynamics of the relationships that exist between stakeholders can lead to obstructions that have a negative impact on your overall project.

Book 2: the engagement planning workbook will take you through the process of identifying the key stakeholders and their interest in the project, their level of influence and what they consider to be a successful outcome.

Book 3: the engagement toolkit provides a range of tools for identifying the best course of action to engage and communicate with stakeholders.

4.2.2 Engaging Diverse Groups

The Victorian community is diverse with people of different backgrounds, needs, values and aspirations. Victoria's diversity reflects the many characteristics that capture difference between people. Observable and unobservable, these characteristics include ethnicity, gender, age, tenure, functional background, socio-economic background, values, sexual orientation and physical and mental ability.

This broad definition of diversity builds on the concept of equal opportunity. It goes beyond the concept of rectifying the disadvantage of target groups by emphasising the importance of an inclusive culture and of valuing difference between individuals and communities. While we should aim to be inclusive in all our work, at

times it may be necessary to tailor our engagement processes and activities to enable some communities or individuals to fully participate.

To assist with your planning, we have provided the following information to help you engage some of the communities who are often overlooked or who face additional barriers to participation. For example, a young adult may be studying, seeking work and raising young children (like many other Victorians), but they may also have recently arrived from a war-torn country, suffered torture and have English as a second language. This is not an uncommon occurrence in Victoria.



However, do not be daunted by the volume and complexity of diversity statistics or by the anecdotes about working inclusively. This section has been designed to provide some insights and information about working with diverse communities to help you ask the right questions, successfully direct your lines of inquiry and find further assistance where required.

A selection of organisations who can assist you to engage with Indigenous, culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) people, young people, seniors, women and people with disabilities has been provided in Appendix D.

Over time you will build your own networks, become more aware of the relevant issues and of what questions to ask that relate to your work. Being inclusive will become an everyday part of your thinking and planning.

DSE staff should refer to the Department's intranet, under Social and Cultural Diversity, for more information and resources to assist with engaging diverse groups within the community.

Here are some general considerations for working more inclusively. These are followed by some specific considerations for engaging different stakeholder groups:

- Building trust is often the first step in successfully engaging communities that have in the past been marginalised or engaged in a tokenistic way. This may initially take time and involve a lot of learning for you, but it will provide long-term benefits.
- Some groups are networked within a community structure, while others are represented by peak bodies. They are valuable starting points for getting assistance with approaching and communicating with the group that you wish to engage (refer to Appendix D).
- These contacts can also provide advice about the most effective ways of communicating with particular communities and also vital practical knowledge, such as where and how a particular group meets or whether you would need interpreters.
- Community agencies often operate on low and unpredictable levels of funding. This can limit their capacity to participate in an engagement process regarding planning or environment issues, especially in the face of more pressing or short-term issues such as helping clients to find accommodation, find a job or cope with a mental illness.
- Initially, you may have to negotiate ways to help these communities to work with you. For example, when you bring a group of stakeholders together for the first time, you may find the issues and concerns they raise are slightly different, or outside the scope of your project. What do you do? You might first try working with the group to address their immediate goals or priorities, possibly bringing in other agencies to assist. By demonstrating a willingness to address the immediate concerns of the stakeholders, you are more likely to build a relationship of trust that will make it easier to work with this group and others during the current project and in the future.

Building partnerships for long-term benefits: a practical example

In 1997, the Inner West Region Migrant Resource Centre was the first MRC to work with an environment department. They were initially supported by DSE's Coast Action/Coastcare program to explore different cultural perceptions of coastal resources. Even though this MRC has closed, the networks established through this collaboration still operate successfully.

Indigenous

There are a number of reasons why project or program teams could decide to engage Indigenous communities - not least of which is that there may be a legislative requirement for them to do so. For example, The Native Title Act (1993) includes a Right to Negotiate, which means that native title holders must be consulted in advance if a government plans to grant certain interests to their land.

Another consideration is the protection of Aboriginal Cultural Heritage which exists throughout the lands and waters of Australia. All aspects of the landscape may be important to Indigenous people as part of their heritage. Maintaining Indigenous heritage ensures a continuing role for Indigenous people in caring for country, something that is beneficial to everyone.

Cultural awareness training is also a very important aspect of engaging Indigenous communities. This is likely to assist you in the following areas:

- improved understanding of the issues that are important to Indigenous people and their communities
- creating more sustainable relationships between Indigenous people and the wider community
- the opportunity to explore the disadvantages resulting from the dispossession of Aboriginal land.

To identify which Indigenous communities need to be engaged, it is necessary to determine which groups sit within (or perhaps just adjacent to) the focus area of the project. While some projects have clear boundaries, others may be issue-based and therefore without such obvious borders. In most cases there are specific contact people or groups within a community responsible for specialised industries such as housing, health, education and land and natural resource management.



Challenges to Indigenous Engagement ¹⁰		
Fact	Implications	Solutions you might try
Some communities are economically disadvantaged, and individuals even more so.	Unable to attend meetings or other engagement activities due to lack of transport or finances.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Allow for longer lead times and include travel reimbursement costs in the project budget so that no-one is out of pocket. • Meet at community organisations or homes if required. • When meeting at other venues, you may need to arrange transport.
Community business regarding death, funerals, ill health or any matter of concern can and will impact on your meeting or engagement activity arrangements.	If community members choose not to participate due to those matters, do not be judgmental or view your attempts as a failure.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure engagement teams are flexible. Multiple attempts may be required to capture some audiences. • Always allow a long lead time and re-attempt to hold your meeting or engagement activity. • Arranging a local person or organisation to facilitate any of the above can assist you to fulfil your requirements.

Making it easy for Indigenous people to participate in your activities


The availability of private transport is a real issue for many people in Victoria's Indigenous communities. This is further compounded when engaging communities in a regional context, and where Indigenous Elders are required to attend meetings.

For DSE staff, the first point of contact when engaging Indigenous groups should be the Department's Indigenous Facilitators. They will help you to identify the groups and individuals you will need to include in your engagement process, facilitate this process and provide their own insights into the issue the project is addressing.

¹⁰ Shaw, H (2005) 'A guide to assist staff to engage with Indigenous communities', unpublished paper, Victorian Department of Sustainability and Environment, Melbourne

Culturally and Linguistically Diverse

When working with culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) stakeholders, consider the following:

- Working face-to-face in the early stages of relationship building is extremely important, so you will need to allocate sufficient time in planning your engagement.
 - At times, including a social component in a presentation or event can help break down any barriers or fears that people may have about participating. This could include sharing food, tree planting or a trip to the beach.
- 
- Different communication styles may be required, depending on the group and underlying influences such as:
 - sensitivities to discussing personal topics and making decisions on behalf of their community
 - proficiency in English (written and verbal). Some people from non-English speaking backgrounds may, understandably, lack the confidence to use their English in a public speaking situation
 - literacy in a first language. Remember that for many refugees, their schooling may have been repeatedly interrupted or ceased altogether due to war, political upheaval or having no access to formal education services
 - previous experiences with governments, especially in the country of origin; torture or corruption may be commonplace in some countries
 - preferred methods to receive and communicate information, such as local papers, radio, word-of-mouth, organisations and the internet. For example, the Somali community in Victoria does not have any print media, so ethnic talkback radio is their prime source of information and their opportunity to discuss ideas and provide feedback
 - awareness of government programs and processes.
 - It is important to understand and accommodate the considerable time commitments of community leaders. As the main contact point for a community, the leaders will often receive many external requests from government and the private sector for consultations, information or feedback from the community on a wide range of issues. At the same time, community members also rely heavily on their leaders to help them with their own difficulties.
 - Local councils may have good contacts and networks with CALD communities in their area, including neighbourhood houses, ethno-specific agencies and English-as-a-second-language classes. They may also have CALD workers on staff.
 - Consider early on in the engagement the possibility of using interpreters to assist with the translation of written material or to interpret during workshops or meetings.

People with Disabilities

Most people with a disability do not require specific disability supports and live independently in the community. However, many people with a disability, and their parents, families and carers face inequalities and barriers to participation in the community.

The main types of disabilities are:

- **Intellectual disability**
(For example, a person who has significantly below average intelligence [based on an IQ test], or who may have difficulty with everyday life skills.)
- **Physical disability**
(For example, a person who uses a wheelchair or has difficulties with communication.)
- **Sensory disability**
(For example, a person who is Deaf, blind or has a vision or hearing impairment.)
- **Psychiatric disability**
(For example, a person who has a mental illness.)
- **Acquired brain injury**
(For example, a person who was not born with a disability, but acquired their disability; perhaps through a car accident or drug abuse.)
- **Neurological impairment**
(For example, a person who has a degenerative condition such as multiple sclerosis, Huntington's Disease or motor neurone disease.)

Some people may have more than one type of disability. For example, a person who has a vision impairment may also have an intellectual disability.

When engaging with people with disabilities:

- Ask the people you are planning to engage what their needs are. They will be in the best position to tell you how you can best assist them to contribute to the engagement processes.
- Use organisations or community groups that support people with disabilities to help arrange and conduct your engagement (see Appendix D for a listing of organisations and their contact details).
- Put the person first, not their disability. Describe 'a person with a disability' rather than 'a disabled person'. Remember that you are engaging with the person, not with the disability they may have.
- Some people with disabilities have carers. It is important to address any communication to the person with the disability and not to their carer or friend. It is also important to be mindful of the carer's needs in organising any engagement activities.
- In general, all engagement should be inclusive so that people with disabilities can participate in the same ways as others in the community. However, some people with disabilities may have difficulties, for example, being heard or understood in a large public forum, and it may be necessary to organise smaller forums that better suit their needs.
- If choosing venues to get together, consider whether the site is accessible (public transport, ramps), whether the building is internally accessible (suitable door widths, accessible toilets) and whether it meets the specific requirements of the people you are engaging (Braille and tactile signage, hearing augmentation system).¹¹



¹¹ Department of Human Services (2004), *Inclusive consultation and communication with people with a disability*, Disabilities Services Division, Victorian Government Department of Human Services, Melbourne



Young People

As with many of the diverse groups that exist in our society, young people have valuable contributions to make if enabled to participate. The following tips may be helpful in engaging young people:

- Do not consider all young people as one homogenous group. Characteristics such as gender, age and cultural background need to be considered. As with the broader community, consider which young people would be interested and benefit from involvement.
- Building trust with young people is a fundamental basis for effective engagement. Consider strategies and tools that are appropriate to establish trust with young people.
- Consider whether organisations and agencies who work with young people could assist with your engagement.
- Provide information to young people in ways they can understand. It may be helpful to engage a young person to assist in your planning. Where possible, test your planning and any prepared material with a small number of young people to ensure relevance.
- Avoid making assumptions about what may interest young people; instead allow them to define what is important from their perspective.
- Consider issues of privacy and consent. Consent needs to be informed, freely given, specific and current to be valid.¹²
- When considering venues to meet with young people, think about places young people may like to gather and consider related issues such as safety and proximity to public transport.



Seniors

Senior Victorians are a growing part of our population. They have a wealth and diversity of skills, knowledge and life experiences that can enrich our work. It is important to respect their wisdom and to think about their needs in planning any engagement. Some considerations include:

- Many seniors are fit, healthy and mobile, but it is important to be aware of the changing mobility of seniors and the impact it can have on their ability to participate. Two significant changes are when people stop driving and when they can no longer walk unaided.
- Be aware of the difficulties some seniors may have with vision and hearing when selecting and using engagement tools.
- Do not assume seniors will not take up newer technologies. However, they may be limited by lack of confidence, previous experiences or income, and therefore require additional assistance to overcome these barriers.
- Seniors may have time to participate in engagement activities, but remember that they are increasingly taking on additional family roles, in particular, childcare for grandchildren.
- Be aware of possible inter-generational differences between community facilitators and seniors that may impede clear communication, such as language and values.
- Do not always segregate seniors into discrete groups for engagement. It can be beneficial to mix age groups, resulting in a broader understanding of issues by staff and community members.

¹² Youth Affairs Council of Victoria (2004), *Taking young people seriously - consulting young people about their ideas and opinions: a handbook for organisations working with young people*, Office for Youth, Department for Victorian Communities, Melbourne

Gender

It is important to create opportunities for both men and women to be engaged in your engagement process.

Men and women are still not equally represented in decision-making arenas. For example, women still make the majority of the household purchasing decisions and influence consumption patterns. If we are not addressing gender imbalances generally in the engagement process, then we are not only missing out on vital sources of information, but on opportunities for community advocacy of our objectives (e.g. to encourage use of environment-friendly products or reduce the demand for over-packaged products).

The following tips are designed to assist you plan engagement activities with greater sensitivity towards gender issues:

- Be mindful of the multiple responsibilities of parents when planning any engagement. Think of ways to engage both groups in your process if possible. For example, children could be involved in a creative learning activity about your topic while the parent(s) are contributing to your community engagement activity.
- For some women from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds, you may need to provide women-only opportunities for engagement.
- Rural women can face additional barriers to participation such as distance, access to alternative forms of transport and access to childcare – particularly to cover the long hours that may be taken up by travel.
- Women are generally under-represented on boards and committees and this can make it hard for an individual woman to break into that domain and contribute fully. Consequently, retention rates can be low. You may need to provide extra support and address group culture issues.
- Where appropriate, try to involve a balance of men and women in your engagement to ensure that participation reflects community diversity or your client base. The Office of Women's Policy (see Appendix D) operates a Women's Register that can put you in contact with women who are skilled, experienced and interested in formal committee or board appointments.
- When investigating tools for engagement, consider whether the tools may need to be modified to ensure you get a better gender representation in views, opinions and decisions.



4.3 A Model for Engagement

4.3.1 IAP2 Public Participation Spectrum

The International Association for Public Participation (IAP2) has developed the Public Participation Spectrum to demonstrate the possible types of engagement with stakeholders and communities. The spectrum also shows the increasing level of public impact as you progress from 'inform' through to 'empower'.

Note: IAP2 use the term 'public' to refer to what we have called 'community' or 'stakeholders'. In this workbook, we ask you to consider all stakeholders in your project, not just those in the 'broader' community (or public), but also those within your own organisation, including yourself and/or your project team.

Each type of engagement shown in the spectrum is explored in more detail in section 4.3.3.

Previous editions of this workbook used a model entitled The Wheel of Engagement¹³ as the foundation for determining the purpose of engagement and the level of participation of a defined stakeholder/community.

The IAP2 Public Participation Spectrum has been used here to highlight an additional possible level of engagement, 'collaboration'. Missing from this model however, but explicit in The Wheel of Engagement, is the 'social capacity' component of engagement - the ability of stakeholders/community to act. This concept is further explored in section 4.3.2 under 'Human, Social and Community Capacity'.

¹³ The Wheel of Engagement was developed by K Pryosusilo, C Pilioussis, P Howden, E Phillips & M Gooley of the Community Strategies Section of Catchment and Water Division in the previous Victorian Department of Natural Resources and Environment

IAP2 PUBLIC PARTICIPATION SPECTRUM

INCREASING LEVEL OF PUBLIC IMPACT				
INFORM	CONSULT	INVOLVE	COLLABORATE	EMPOWER
Public Participation Goal:	Public Participation Goal:	Public Participation Goal:	Public Participation Goal:	Public Participation Goal:
To provide the public with balanced and objective information to assist them in understanding the problems, alternatives and/or solutions.	To obtain public feedback on analysis, alternatives and/or decisions.	To work directly with the public throughout the process to ensure that public concerns and aspirations are consistently understood and considered.	To partner with the public in each aspect of the decision, including the development of alternatives and the identification of the preferred solution.	To place final decision-making in the hands of the public.
Promise to the Public:	Promise to the Public:	Promise to the Public:	Promise to the Public:	Promise to the Public:
We will keep you informed.	We will keep you informed, listen to and acknowledge concerns and provide feedback on how public input influenced the decision.	We will work with you to ensure that your concerns and aspirations are directly reflected in the alternatives developed and provide feedback on how public input influenced the decision.	We will look to you for direct advice and innovation in formulating solutions and incorporate your advice and recommendations into the decisions to the maximum extent possible.	We will implement what you decide.
Example Tools:	Example Tools:	Example Tools:	Example Tools:	Example Tools:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • fact sheets • web sites • open houses. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • public comment • focus groups • surveys • public meetings. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • workshops • deliberate polling. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • citizen advisory committees • consensus-building • participatory decision-making. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • citizen juries • ballots • delegated decisions.

4.3.2 Implications for Engagement

The Level of Public Impact

As you move through the spectrum from the left to right – inform through to empower - there is a corresponding increase in expectation for public participation and impact. In simply ‘informing’ stakeholders there is no expectation of receiving feedback, and consequently there is a low level of public impact. At the other end of the spectrum, ‘empowering’ stakeholders to make decisions implies an increase in expectations and therefore an increased level of public impact.

It is also worth noting that the level of tasks can be high at the ‘inform’ end of the spectrum, while the strength of the relationship between yourself and the stakeholder/community may be low. As you move through the spectrum, tasks begin to differ and the strength of relationships increases through consult, involve, collaborate and finally to empower, where the main focus is not the task but the importance of the relationship.

It is sometimes assumed the level of difficulty involved in the engagement process increases with the level of participation, with ‘inform’ being perceived as being easy by comparison to ‘empower’. In reality, where engagement is effective to its purpose, no part of the spectrum is harder or more preferable than another. Indeed, the need for different skills and depth and trust in relationships can make all parts of the spectrum both challenging and rewarding.

Human, Social and Community Capacity

There is an accepted government imperative to look at participatory processes that build the capacity of community, other stakeholders as well as ourselves, to respond to social, environmental and economic challenges. Consequently, an understanding of human, social and community capacity is required for effective engagement planning and implementation.

Community capacity is the sum of two important concepts – **human** and **social** capacity. Human capacity is the skills, knowledge and abilities of individuals. Social capacity is the nature and strength of relationships and level of trust that exists between individuals.

These two elements can be mutually reinforcing. For example, individual skills can be applied much more effectively in an environment where there is trust and cooperation. Similarly, a close-knit community can respond more quickly to change if there is a range of individual skills and leadership abilities available to sustain development.



(Excerpt from the Public Participation Spectrum.
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The increasing level of public impact of the IAP2 Public Participation Spectrum has implications not just for the effect of the engagement on the community, but also the ability of the community to participate or respond positively to this impact.

As part of your engagement planning you may need to consider:

- What is the community's capacity (human and social) to participate or meet your expectations?
- What is your role in building community capacity?
- What is your capacity (human and social) and others in the project to build community capacity (see the 'Learn' section of *Book 2: the engagement planning workbook* for further details)?

In addition, social relations constitute an additional resource for individuals and communities. By understanding the dynamics of these relationships, it is possible to achieve mutually beneficial outcomes.¹⁴ See the 'Stakeholder Analysis' section of *Book 2: the engagement planning workbook* for further details.

The process of disseminating information (inform) is fundamental to many government and non-government activities. While this serves to build individual knowledge (human capacity), it contributes only minimally to social capacity. This is particularly true of one-way processes such as newsletters or media releases.

However, engagement activities from further along the spectrum, such as a participatory extension or education program, can not only build individual knowledge (e.g. through the subject or nature of the program), but also build relationships between those who are learning together. Skills learnt are often reinforced through peer support, exchange of ideas and experiences. While there is an increasing level of expectation in participation and a greater reliance upon the abilities of those involved to meet this expectation, the positive impact on learning and relationships extends the potential success of the activity for the government/organisation and the stakeholder/community.

Community engagement is an investment in both the present and the future of a community's human and social capacity. For example:

- If communities are not adequately informed, an imbalance in knowledge is created that privileges some and alienates others.
- If involvement is promised, or action from a consultation expected, but not delivered, trust between the community and government is eroded. Future approaches may then be compromised by current actions.
- If representatives of some segments of the community are empowered and not others, this can further divide a community.
- If leadership programs are not sensitive to community structure or diversity, they can erode any trust the leader has built within that community.



¹⁴ Voyer, J-P (2004) 'A network approach to facilitating and measuring social capital', *Expert workshop on measurement of social capital for public policy*, Synthesis Report, June, Statistics Canada

4.3.3 Exploring the Types of Engagement

The following section explores each type of engagement from the IAP2 Public Participation Spectrum, from ‘inform’ through to ‘empower’. It explains the underlying principles, provides examples of how they can be used and any additional considerations for each type of engagement.

After reading this section, you will be well placed to select the appropriate type or types of engagement when developing your own Engagement Plan in *Book 2: the engagement planning workbook*.

Inform

The ‘inform’ column of the spectrum describes the communication of information to the community or other stakeholders and is the foundation of all community engagement processes.

The overall goal of this type of engagement is to provide stakeholders with balanced and objective information. This process can provide the basis for building knowledge and skills in the community in order to assist decision-making and change through:

- increasing understanding of issues, alternatives or solutions
- increasing stakeholder/community ability to address issues
- increasing community compliance with regulation and other requirements associated with change.

Those you inform can range from the general public to key stakeholder groups and organisations. The processes used can be proactive (information dissemination) or responsive (responding to questions from the community). Informing involves one- or two-way communication over various timeframes.

Examples include one-off communication such as brochures or media releases through to longer term, intensive processes such as community education.

INFORM
Public Participation Goal:
To provide the public with balanced and objective information to assist them in understanding the problems, alternatives and/or solutions.
Promise to the Public:
We will keep you informed.
Example Tools:
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• fact sheets• web sites• open houses.

(Excerpt from the Public Participation Spectrum. Copyright IAP2. All rights reserved.)

“... know who you are trying to reach and how they are most likely to access and understand the information ...”

General Guidelines

The following are general guidelines for disseminating information effectively within the community:

- Know who you are trying to reach and how they are most likely to access and understand the information (refer to ‘Community Profiling’ in section 3.5.).
- Ensure information provided is:
 - high quality
 - consistent
 - timely
 - appropriately targeted
 - clear and easily understood by your audience.

Additional Considerations:

Although information is essential for all participation, it is not in itself participatory, nor is it directly linked to the adoption of this information.

The link between knowledge and implementing change is strongest when the people who are expected to implement change are involved in developing the knowledge that provides the capacity to act.

Often the solutions offered during the informing process, by way of knowledge and skills, tend to be technical or scientific, and may not allow for a full understanding of the complexity of the issue. Refining your audience and key messages through market research may miss links that could be explored through other processes such as ‘involve’, ‘collaborate’ or ‘empower’.



Consult

This column of the spectrum describes the process of eliciting feedback on information provided. The goal of this type of engagement is to obtain feedback on analysis, alternatives or decisions.

Consultation actively seeks community views and input into policy, plans and decisions. The responsibility for the decisions remains with government or the organisation doing the consulting.

There are a range of ways consultation can occur, including processes that require little or no dialogue. Examples include written consultation (e.g. a one-off survey in a newsletter, or documents made available for public comment) through to those involving dialogue and debate such as public meetings, focus groups and processes where the stakeholder/community is able to influence proposed options. Processes for gaining rural intelligence, social research and attitudinal surveys would also be included here.



CONSULT

Public Participation Goal:

To obtain public feedback on analysis, alternatives and/or decisions.

Promise to the Public:

We will keep you informed, listen to and acknowledge concerns and provide feedback on how public input influenced the decision.

Example Tools:

- public comment
- focus groups
- surveys
- public meetings.

(Excerpt from the Public Participation Spectrum. Copyright IAP2. All rights reserved.)

“... ensure the purpose of the consultation is clear, including what is being consulted on and what is non-negotiable ...”

General Guidelines

The following are general guidelines for appropriate and timely consultation processes; building on from those guidelines outlined under ‘inform’:

- Ensure the purpose of consultation is clear, including what is being consulted on and what is non-negotiable.
- Know who you are trying to consult, the most effective way to reach them and get a response.
- Allow enough time for a response to consultation requests.
- Coordinate requests so that, where possible and appropriate, you ask for views once, not several times.
- Provide feedback on the results of consultation.
- Ensure and demonstrate that the views of those consulted are taken into account in the outcome.
- Present all information simply and clearly.
- Ensure adequate resources are allocated to the process.

Additional Considerations:

Consultation is an effective process in community engagement, as long as the expected levels of participation and commitment are expressed and matched with the expectations of all relevant stakeholders.

It is important to fulfil the promise of providing feedback on how this input has influenced the decision, otherwise stakeholders may not take up ownership of the decision, particularly where change in attitudes, values or practices is concerned.

Involve

The goal of this method of engagement is to work directly with the public throughout the process to ensure that public concerns and aspirations are consistently understood and considered.

The difference between ‘consult’ and ‘involve’ is the level of participation expected of the community and other stakeholders. While consulting requires the facilitator to seek feedback at a given point in time, involving means deliberately putting into place a method to work directly with stakeholders throughout the process.

However, while ‘involve’ assumes a greater level of participation by stakeholders as they work through issues and alternatives to assist in the decision-making process, the organisation undertaking the engagement generally retains responsibility for the final decision.



INVOLVE

Public Participation Goal:

To work directly with the public throughout the process to ensure that public concerns and aspirations are consistently understood and considered.

Promise to the Public:

We will work with you to ensure that your concerns and aspirations are directly reflected in the alternatives developed and provide feedback on how public input influenced the decision.

Example Tools:

- workshops
- deliberate polling.

(Excerpt from the Public Participation Spectrum. Copyright IAP2. All rights reserved.)

“... work with the community to ensure their concerns are directly reflected in alternatives and solutions ...”

General Guidelines

The following are general guidelines for involving the community:

- Ensure all relevant people are given the opportunity to be involved.
- Ensure you maintain a commitment to enabling their involvement in the process (have equity/access issues been considered that ensure that individuals are not unknowingly disadvantaged?).
- Consider carefully what processes and/or structures are appropriate for the purpose and who is to be engaged.
- Avoid misunderstanding and ambiguity by clearly establishing the basis for membership of bodies such as boards or committees (e.g. skills vs representation), the decision-making processes (e.g. voting vs consensus) and roles and responsibilities at the outset.

Additional Considerations:

This level of engagement demands a higher level of participation and inclusion with stakeholders. Those who develop Engagement Plans at this level must work with the community to ensure their concerns are directly reflected in alternatives and solutions, and be explicit as to how this input was incorporated within the decision-making process.

It is also important to be clear in communications with stakeholders to avoid fallout from unrealised expectations. This may include stakeholders assuming they are able to make final decisions when this is not necessarily the case. Again, there needs to be an alignment of expectations to establish what is negotiable and what is not negotiable at the beginning of the project.

Collaborate

The goal of this type of engagement is to partner with the community in each aspect of the decision, including the development of alternatives and the identification of the preferred position.

This method of engagement further extends the level of participation and, consequently, the impact upon the community. Ownership is shared between the organisation and the stakeholders. There is a greater level of delegated decision-making, but the organisation responsible for the engagement may still retain the overall decision-making power.

Collaborative partnerships can range from loose affiliations through to establishing formal boards or committees. In the case of DSE, an example of a collaborative engagement arrangement can be seen in the establishment of the Victorian Catchment Management Authorities. While the establishment of these entities devolves management at a local level, responsibility for final policy, legislative frameworks and overall budget decisions is still retained by government.



COLLABORATE

Public Participation Goal:

To partner with the public in each aspect of the decision, including the development of alternatives and the identification of the preferred solution.

Promise to the Public:

We will look to you for direct advice and innovation in formulating solutions and incorporate your advice and recommendations into the decisions to the maximum extent possible.

Example Tools:

- citizen advisory committees
- consensus-building
- participatory decision-making.

(Excerpt from the Public Participation Spectrum. Copyright IAP2. All rights reserved.)

“... there must be clarity about the extent of decision-making power that is delegated and, in particular, what is not included ...”

General Guidelines

The following are general guidelines for collaboration with the community:

- There must be clarity about the extent of decision-making power that is delegated and, in particular, what is not included.
- Avoid misunderstanding and ambiguity by clearly establishing the basis for membership of bodies such as boards or committees (e.g. skills vs representation), decision-making processes (e.g. voting vs consensus) and roles and responsibilities at the outset.
- Where formal partnership arrangements are involved, governance arrangements need to be carefully considered.

Additional Considerations:

A far greater level of trust in relationships is required to ensure collaborative efforts are effective. Alignment of core values may need to be considered to establish effective and productive collaborative partnerships. While the investment required to ensure relationships are productive maybe high, the combined efforts of partners may extend the ownership and success of the desired outcomes in ways that could not have been achieved through less participatory methods.

Empower

The goal of this method of engagement is to place final decision-making in the hands of the public.

Empowered communities share responsibility for making decisions and accountability for the outcomes of those decisions.

Legislative and policy frameworks give power to communities to make decisions. The community may have the power to make a limited range of decisions (e.g. on a specified issue or for a limited time), or it may have extensive decision-making powers.

The pilot mini-Citizen’s Jury conducted by the Victorian Glenelg Hopkins Catchment Management Authority to aid in the development of their Draft River Health Strategy¹⁵ is an example of empowerment.



EMPOWER

Public Participation Goal:

To place final decision-making in the hands of the public.

Promise to the Public:

We will implement what you decide.

Example Tools:

- citizen juries
- ballots
- delegated decisions.

(Excerpt from the Public Participation Spectrum. Copyright IAP2. All rights reserved.)

¹⁵ Bolitho, Dr A (2005) *Citizen’s juries for natural resource management*, Social Capacity Building Project Catchment Strategies, Victorian Department of Sustainability and Environment, Melbourne

“... empowered communities share responsibility for making decisions and accountability for the outcomes of those decisions ...”

General Guidelines

The following are general guidelines for empowering communities:

- There must be clarity as to the scope of the shared power and/or decision-making capabilities.
- There must be clarity about roles and responsibilities.
- Issues involving accountability need to be carefully considered.
- Communities need sufficient resources (human and social capital) to enable an empowerment approach.

Additional Considerations:

This is the most challenging approach to community engagement, but offers the greatest rewards in building capacity. There is a commitment by the initiators of the engagement to participate as a stakeholder and to share power in decision-making to achieve collaborative action.

The promise by users of this process is to maintain a high level of active engagement during the development, design and implementation of the approach. Those who do not participate to this extent risk breaking the principles of inclusiveness, transparency and trust.

The rewards of an empowerment approach are often more innovative results that incorporate the knowledge of all participants as well as reduced conflict, greater ownership of outcomes and commitment to ongoing action.

Glossary

Action learning

"... a continuous process of learning and reflection, supported by colleagues, with an intention of getting things done."¹⁶

Adult learning principles

Adult learning is a process of self directed inquiry.¹⁷ Adult learning principles include: "... autonomous and self directed learning ... connection of life experience and knowledge...goal and relevancy oriented ... practical ... and affording of respect ..."¹⁸

Capacity building

The development of skills, abilities, relationships and networks between and within individuals and groups within a defined community.

Citizens

Individuals within a community.

Community

Groups who share a common sense of belonging and where there is a level of trust between members:

- Geographical – based around where people live, such as neighbourhood, suburb or town.
- Interest – based around common interests, such as conservation, social justice or sporting interest.
- Identity – based on sharing a common identity such as age, culture or lifestyle.¹⁹

Community capacity

"... consists of the networks, organisation, attitudes, leadership and skills that allow communities to manage change and sustain community-led development ..."²⁰

Community engagement

"... mutual communication and deliberation that occurs between government and citizens. It allows citizens and government to participate mutually in the formulation of policy and the provision of government services ..."²¹

(see Stakeholder engagement)

Community profile

"Community profiling involves documenting: the social environment in order to develop a more detailed understanding of the historical background of the community; the statistical profile of the community; contemporary issues; political and social structures; culture; and, attitudes towards the proposal or proposed change."²²

Community strengthening

"... is a process whereby communities, government, business and philanthropic organisations work together to achieve agreed social, economic and environmental outcomes."²³

Extension

To work with communities to accelerate the rate of change in particular aspects of endeavour, over and above that being realised through the normal activities of the marketplace. Often used in the context of agricultural or natural resource management activities.

Human capacity

The collective skills and abilities of individuals within a community.

Learning style

This concept seeks to explain how different people prefer to learn in different ways. Effective learners rely on all four different learning modes: active, reflective, theoretical and pragmatic. These learning styles coincide with stages in the action learning cycle: experiencing, reviewing, concluding and planning.²⁴

Project system

The social, environmental, cultural and economic conditions in which the project exists. These conditions can influence and have impact upon the implementation and outcome of a project.

Project team

A group of people working together to develop a process and take action to achieve their project goals.

¹⁶ McGill, I & Beaty, L (2001) *Action learning: a guide for professional, management & educational development*, Kogan Page, London

¹⁷ Knowles, MS (1970) *The modern practice of adult education: andragogy verses pedagogy*, New York Association Press

¹⁸ Lieb, S (1991) *Principles of adult learning*, Arizona Department of Health Services/South Mountain Community College, Vision, USA

¹⁹ <http://www.communitybuilding.vic.gov.au/graphic/overview> [accessed 28/06/2005]

²⁰ Cavaye, JM (2000) 'The role of government in community capacity building', *Department of Primary Industries and Fisheries information series*, Q199804, Queensland Government

²¹ Cavaye, Dr. J (2001) 'Community engagement framework project: scoping and review paper', Cavaye Community Development/ CEO Committee on Land Resources, Queensland citing OECD (2001) 'Engaging Citizens in policy-making: information, consultation and public participation', *PUMA Policy brief No 10*, July 2001, Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development

²² Fenton, DM & Coakes, SJ (1998) 'Social impact assessment and water resource management: an application of TC analysis', unpublished paper, Sheridan Coakes Consulting, November 1998:4

²³ <http://www.communitybuilding.vic.gov.au/graphic/overview> [accessed 28/06/2005]

²⁴ For an inventory of learning styles, see Honey, P & Mumford, A (1992) *The manual of learning styles*, Honey Press, Maidenhead, UK

**Social capacity**

The sum of the relationships and trust between individuals within a community.

Social capital

The networks and relationships that foster trust, reciprocity and social cohesion.

Stakeholders

Individuals and/or groups with an interest in an activity and/or outcome. Stakeholders may be internal or external to the organisation and may be direct or indirect beneficiaries of an activity or outcome.

Stakeholder engagement

Stakeholder engagement is a way of thinking about external audiences and their relationship to organisational outcomes. It implies a longer term relationship where both parties have a mutual interest in, and ability to impact upon, the project outcomes.

External stakeholders may not necessarily be outside your organisation. They can also include those internal to the organisation but, external to your unit, program or project.

(see Community engagement)

Recommended resources

B.1 Publications

Arnstein, SR (1971) 'A ladder of citizen participation in the USA', *Journal of Town Planning Institute*, Vol 57, No. 4

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Aspen Institute (1996) *Measuring community capacity building: a workbook in progress for rural communities*, The Aspen Institute, Washington DC

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Woodhill, J & Robins, L (1998) *Participatory evaluation for Landcare and Catchment groups: a guide for facilitators*, Greening Australia, Canberra

B.2 Websites

Please refer to the Community Engagement website for web links, <http://www.dse.vic.gov.au/engage>.

B

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C.2 Websites

<http://www.communitybuilding.vic.gov.au/graphic/overview> [accessed 28/06/2005]

<http://www.iap2.org> [accessed 07/06/2005]

Diversity groups additional contacts

D.1 General

Department for Victorian Communities (DVC) can guide local communities and community groups and assist them to access local-level data that will support community building activities.

<http://www.dvc.vic.gov.au>

Diversity @ Work provides a wide range of diversity data and analysis, answers to common questions and training.

<http://diversityatwork.com.au>

D.2 Indigenous

Aboriginal Affairs Victoria (AAV) will give you information on state Aboriginal organisations, cultural heritage contacts and further information.

<http://www.dvc.vic.gov.au/aav>

Native Title Tribunal provides information and services about native title applications, future acts and native title agreement-making.

<http://www.nntt.gov.au>

Regional Indigenous Facilitators

DSE has six Indigenous Facilitators to assist with Indigenous community partnerships. The Indigenous Facilitator should be the first point of contact for all DSE staff in relation to Indigenous land and natural resource management issues.

D.3 Culturally and Linguistically Diverse

Victorian Office of Multicultural Affairs provides policy advice to the Victorian Government in the areas of multicultural affairs, immigration and community relations.

<http://www.voma.vic.gov.au>

Ethnic Communities' Council of Victoria is the peak non-government body representing ethnic communities throughout Victoria.

<http://www.eccv.org.au>

Migrant Resource Centres are community-based, non-government and non-profit organisations, established for the development and provision of community welfare services and establishment of social support groups.

http://www.immi.gov.au/grants/mrc_msa_b.htm#vic

D.4 People with Disabilities

Disability Advisory Council of Victoria provides advice to the Victorian Minister for Community Services on issues concerning people with disabilities in order to assist the Victorian Government achieve its policy objectives.

<http://www.dac.vic.gov.au>

Disability Online provides a listing and links to supports and services.

<http://www.disability.vic.gov.au>

Vision Australia offers tips on meeting and communicating with people who have vision impairment.

<http://www.visionaustralia.org.au>

Victorian Deaf Society (Vicdeaf) is a non-profit organisation and the primary source of reference, referral, advice and support for deaf adults in Victoria.

<http://www.vicdeaf.com.au>

Better Hearing Australia has a community education program to understand hearing impaired clients.

<http://www.betterhearing.org.au/communed.htm>

D.5 Young People

Office for Youth runs a range of programs and plays a leadership role in coordinating research and policy development on youth issues.

<http://www.youth.vic.gov.au>

Youth Liaison Officers support the 15 Regional Youth Affairs Networks (RYAN) across Victoria, providing regional advice on policy, planning and service provision issues relating to young people.

<http://www.youth.vic.gov.au/ryan.htm>

D.6 Seniors

Office of Senior Victorians coordinates policy and action across government to promote the wellbeing and social participation of older Victorians.

<http://www.seniors.vic.gov.au>

Seniors Information Victoria provides contacts and ideas for communicating with older people.

<http://www.cotavic.org.au/seniorsinformation>

D.7 Gender

Office of Women's Policy (OWP), DVC, provides strategic policy advice to the Victorian Government, with the aim of creating better outcomes for all women.

<http://www.women.vic.gov.au>

Rural Women's Network is concerned with valuing and responding to women's voices across rural and regional Victoria.

<http://www.doi.vic.gov.au/web7/rwnhome.nsf>

How useful did you find the *Effective Engagement* kit? (circle rating out of 5)

1 2 3 4 5
not useful extremely useful

Would you recommend it to others? (tick one)

☐ Yes ☐ No

Why or why not?

What changes would you suggest we make to the *Effective Engagement* kit?

Are you interested in more information about the Community Engagement Community of Practice (CoP)?

☐ Yes ☐ No

Are you interested in being consulted or involved in the development of future editions of the *Effective Engagement* kit?

☐ Yes ☐ No

Your name

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Please send your completed form to:

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DSE Community Engagement
Network, 310 Commercial Road,
Yarram, Victoria, 3971

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