Community Engagement Training

agpn

Australian
General Practice
Network

A joint project of the AGPN-SBO Coalition

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About the Australian General Practice Network

The Australian General Practice Network (AGPN) is the largest representative voice for general practice in Australia.

It is the peak national body of the divisions of general practice, comprising 119 divisions across Australia, as well as eight state-based bodies (SBOs). Approximately 95 per cent of GPs are members of a local division of general practice. With around 57 per cent of practices now employing a nurse, AGPN also supports a practice nurse network in general practice. Increasingly, divisions are employing or supporting allied health professionals such as physiotherapists, dieticians and psychologists to be part of the primary care team.

Through the divisions Network general practitioners (GPs) participate in key health sector decision-making and advisory bodies having direct input into policy and programs across areas such as general practice financing, GP workforce and training, clinical practice and practice management.

Divisions are an integral component of the Australian Government's general practice strategy. They play a major part in implementing policy, supporting general practice and managing health programs at a local level. Divisions have been responsible for progressing many of the current developments in Australian general practice.

Background and context

The Australian Government is committed to encouraging a stronger, more active role for consumers at all levels of the health system. Since the establishment of the Divisions of General Practice, the Department of Health and Ageing has been encouraging them to actively engage with consumers – and report on their activities in this area. Divisions have been using a variety of strategies to engage with consumers and their local communities.

Community engagement is vital in comprehensive primary health care. While representation is one approach, divisions also use other effective strategies to connect with their local consumers and community. If we are to achieve a greater focus on wellness within our community, consumers of health care need to know that general practice services are designed to empower them to take and active role in their care, and not be merely recipients of care.

The AGPN-SBO Coalition, through negotiations with the Department of Health and Ageing, has provided funding via the 2006 Performance and Development funding pool to enable the implementation of a divisional network training program for engaging with their local communities and consumers. This will be completed via internationally acknowledged professional development training and skills enhancement developed by the International Association for Public Participation (IAP2) http://www.iap2.org will form the basis of training and research materials that will be adapted for the needs of Divisional personnel.

There is evidence that identifies the linkage with better health care and effective community engagement. The AGPN-SBO Coalition has identified that skill development in this key area would be a core capacity builder for the divisions network, and thus the rationale for this project. In addition, this approach will assist the Network with mechanisms, skills and tools for not only working with their communities and consumers, but provide improved and enhanced divisional responsiveness to their members needs.

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Workshop outcomes

On completion, program participants who fully participate in all aspects of this workshop will be able to:

- define what community engagement actually means
- identify the need for and the purpose of community engagement
- distinguish between the terms of community consultation, community engagement, and consumer participation
- establish the issue, problem or scope of a decision requiring community engagement
- select the most appropriate level of engagement using the IAP2 Spectrum
- identify, analyse and profile key stakeholder groups
- plan a community engagement process
- understand the benefits and costs of a number of community engagement techniques
- prepare for and implement a number of community engagement techniques.

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Session 1: What is community engagement, and what is it for?

Learning outcomes

At the end of this module participants will be able to:

- define what community engagement actually means
- identify the need for and the purpose of community engagement
- identify the kinds of communities that DGP engage and when
- report on the different roles that DGP have with regard to community engagement, and the implications for these roles.

Introduction

Community engagement is the term in common usage these days. But what does it mean? How is it different to consultation? Is it the same thing as 'consumer participation?' What is it for? What are the benefits and pitfalls? What contexts are there for community engagement related to the work of DGP?

These are the critical questions we will examine in this first session.

Definitions

A variety of terms and concepts are associated with community engagement, and it is important to be clear about the meaning and use of each.

Community engagement:

… is people working collaboratively, through inspired action and learning, to create and realise bold visions for their common future. *(Tamarack, 2003)*

… an ongoing interactive process characterized by commitment to ever-changing community needs and interests". *(Industry Canada, 2002)*

… is the participation of members of a community in assessing, planning, implementing, and evaluating solutions to problems that affect them. As such, community engagement involves interpersonal trust, communication, and collaboration. Such engagement, or participation, should focus on, and result from, the needs, expectations, and desires of a community's members. *(Minnesota Department of Health, 2002)*

… refers to arrangements for citizens and communities to participate in the processes used to make good policy and to deliver on programs and services. *(Queensland Government, Department of the Premier and Cabinet, 2001)*

Consultation:

A process of gaining feedback on proposals, policies and strategies

In practice, often:

- something we just have to do! (checking off the box)
- telling people what is going to happen
- an attempt to placate the public
- just giving the appearance of listening
- simply about managing stakeholders (rather than extracting benefit).

Other terms:

Consumer participation:

… means that people who either directly or indirectly use health services work in partnership with [the health provider] on issues relating to the 'health focus' of the population and the distribution of health services (Western Area Health, NSW).

Consumer:

… patients and potential patients, carers, organisations representing consumers' interests, members of the public who are targets of health promotion programs and health care services. The key attribute that these people share is that they are not researchers or health professionals. Their main experience of health care is as a health consumer or community member (Divisions Evaluation Advisory Group). Consumers are people who have direct experience of receiving a health or community service.

Public relations:

… according to two American PR professionals Scott M. Cutlips and Allen H. Center, "PR is a planned effort to influence opinion through good character and responsible performance based upon mutual satisfactory two-way communication".

Public participation:

… any process that involves the public in problem-solving or decision-making and uses public input to make better decisions (International Association for Public Participation - IAP2)

The public:

… is any individual or group of individuals, organisations or political entities with an interest in the outcome of a decision (IAP2 2005).

The public is not simply those people with an obvious and direct involvement in a decision. The public is anyone who thinks they will be affected or who has some interest in the outcome. The public includes those who perceive they will be affected as well as those who are directly affected.

The community of interest:

… is the group of people, wherever and whoever they are, who might have some role to play in making a better decision. It includes those from inside an organisation (internal stakeholders) and those from outside (external stakeholders).

1. How does community engagement relate to a range of other similar activities?

Public relations … consumer participation ….. stakeholder relations … public consultation or participation … communication … conflict resolution … mediation … facilitation …. organisational development

How do these relate to what your organisation does?

2. What is community engagement?

Your views on community engagement, what it is, what it is not, and the main challenges in doing it well.

The IAP2 Spectrum of Public Participation

IAP2's Public Participation Spectrum

Increasing Level of Public Impact

	Inform	Consult	Involve	Collaborate	Empower
Public participation goal	To provide the public with balanced and objective information to assist them in understanding the problem, alternatives, opportunities 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	We will keep you informed.	We will keep you informed, listen to and acknowledge concerns and aspirations, 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 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 techniques	■ Fact sheets ■ Web sites ■ Open houses	■ Public comment ■ Focus groups ■ Surveys ■ Public meetings	■ Workshops ■ Deliberative polling	■ Citizen advisory Committees ■ Consensus-building ■ Participatory decision-making	■ Citizen juries ■ Ballots ■ Delegated decision

Notes on the IAP2 Spectrum

- The Spectrum is a flexible framework that helps everyone involved to be clear about the level of influence, and what is being promised to participants.
- It is not a hierarchy; one level is not necessarily preferable to any other; it depends on a number of factors such as attitude of the decision-maker, project complexity, level of passion on the part of stakeholders, and amount of benefit to be gained from engagement, and resources available.
- As a general guide, the greater the complexity and passion, the further to the right on the Spectrum you need to be.
- The further to the right on the Spectrum, the greater the level of influence – and the stronger the promise.
- For longer projects it may be quite appropriate to be working at different levels at different times in the project. It is also conceivable that the sponsoring organisation will be engaging different stakeholders at different levels.
- Using the IAP2 Spectrum does not amount to good practice on its own – it needs to be accompanied by the application of core process values.

3. The IAP2 Spectrum provides a framework for different levels of participation/engagement. At what levels do DGP engage its ‘community of interest’?

Community engagement comes in many shapes and sizes and incorporates a wide range of situations, techniques and outcomes. The divisions of general practice undertake community engagement for a number of reasons and in a range of contexts. Those contexts include the following:

As process owners

… where the network seeks to engage with the community of interest to help make a decision. The community of interest might include consumers and providers of health care services.

As partners

… where the network, with partners such as a local council to decide something together, such as where and how to place a new podiatry service.

As participants

… where GPs participate in their own local divisional consultations, such as when deciding how the network should allocate resources to support general practice.

Internal context

… where internal stakeholders, such as staff members, are engaged, for example to decide the direction of a policy, or the details of a service being developed.

Observers

… where you may not be involved actively, but are sufficiently interested to keep informed about processes of relevance. Depending on how such processes unfold you may choose to elevate your level of participation.

4. In what situations do you engage others, or have been engaged?

(Please tick your response in the columns on the right)

Type of Engagement	**Often**	**Rarely**	**Never**
Divisions/practices engaging patients to gain feedback.			
Divisions engaging practices/GPs			
Divisions working with other Divisions			
Divisions engaging other service providers			
Divisions participating in other engagement processes			
Divisions being engaged by SBO's/			

5. At what level on the Spectrum does engagement occur?

(Write down the name of the project/initiative and then tick the appropriate level)

Type of Engagement	**Spectrum Level**				
	Inform	**Consult**	**Involve**	**Collab-orate**	**Empower**
Divisions/practices engaging patients to gain feedback. ***Name of project/initiative:***					
Divisions engaging practices/GPs ***Name of project/initiative:***					
Divisions working with other Divisions ***Name of project/initiative:***					
Divisions engaging other service providers ***Name of project/initiative:***					

Type of Engagement	Spectrum Level				
	Inform	**Consult**	**Involve**	**Collab-orate**	**Empower**
Divisions participating in other engagement processes ***Name of project/initiative:***					
Divisions being engaged by SBOs/AGPN ***Name of project/initiative:***					

6. Discuss your answers with your table. Write down any learnings/insights.

As mentioned above the **'Community of Interest'** can be defined as the group of people, wherever and whoever they are, who might have some role to play in making a better decision. It includes those from inside an organisation (internal stakeholders) and those from outside (external stakeholders).

7. **Who would you regard as the 'Community of Interest' in the following case study? What would the Spectrum level be? What role did the DGP have? (see over)**

Case Study 1 - Engagement through the Charleville Youth Interagency

In 2001 following extensive consultation with a range of health and non-health service providers throughout South West Queensland, the South West Healthy Communities Program commenced implementation of the Adolescent Health program to address risk-taking behaviours among 12-25 year olds. It had been identified that a range of health, education and training opportunities implemented in school, community and youth settings were required to achieve positive health outcomes.

The geographical coverage of South West Queensland is typical of rural and remote areas. Serviced by the larger town of Charleville with a population of approximately 5,000 people, smaller towns throughout the region receive out-reach services. As a result resources including human, financial and equipment, are stretched. Recruitment and retention of staff throughout the region was an issue facing all organisations, with staff turn-over affecting continuity of activities particularly in the primary health care arena. While many smaller towns often felt isolated by not having services based in the town, the larger towns such as Charleville also felt the restraints of not having permanent services available due to the model of service delivery focused on the provision of outreach services and staffing issues. Funding is often available sporadically with organisations vying for available resources and establishing partnerships or collaborative models only if required. Knowledge of available equipment held by the many health and non-health organisations that provide primary health care is often limited due to a lack of documentation and loss of knowledge from staff turn over.

Working by a collaborative model with health, community, social, youth, local and other government organisations, as well as community members, it became apparent that the focus of service delivery needed to shift. Resources needed to be maximised and services needed to reduce duplication which is often the case when a range of organisations are funded to provide primary health care activities to a specific target group. Furthermore services needed to work together in a model that would be inclusive of youth.

The Charleville Youth Interagency was established in 1994 encouraging a collaborative approach between local stakeholders who work with youth. In 2004 SWHCP Adolescent Health program staff participated in a review of the group. Coordinated by the Adolescent Health program the vision of the Charleville Youth Interagency is to value young people and develop an effective and positive framework for working with youth.

Meeting monthly the group:

- shares ideas and information to support each others role
- explores the availability of resources
- creates opportunities for networking and collaborating
- identifies areas of need
- facilitates positive and effective communication.

Outcomes from the meetings positively impact on service delivery within the town. Feedback is also provided to the local Shire Council and local Shire Youth Council impacting on future youth activity planning purposes. Successful activities that have occurred from the Youth Interagency include the implementation of activities and efficient operation of the local Youth Centre, National Youth Week celebrations and school holiday programs, all of which have provided an opportunity to deliver health education and promotion to the local youth in an engaging environment.

Lessons from this example

The engagement process illustrated in the above story indicates that resources have been better utilised through the collaborative work of a range of organisations seeking to provide primary health care to the same target group. Communication and increased knowledge have influenced service delivery and health outcomes are being achieved.

Notes

Session 2: Principles for robust processes

Learning outcomes

At the end of this module participants will be able to:

- draw a link between assumptions held and the impact these have on relationships with stakeholders
- identify the major challenges that face DGP engaging the community.
- identify the benefits of community engagement
- become familiar with examples of effective community engagement in various forms
- identify the three different categories of values that apply to community engagement
- reflect on the extent to which DGP honour core values with its community engagement.

Introduction

Organisations, including all levels of government, are often criticised for not being genuine about their declared willingness to 'consult' the community. In this section we will explain the relevance and importance of values (including the IAP2 Core Values), and consider how assumptions and attitudes impact upon community engagement processes. We will explore some of the main challenges to doing community engagement effectively through the use of a technique known as the World Café.

In addition we will look at the benefits and potential benefits of doing community engagement, and consider the risks of doing engaging, or engaging poorly.

1. What beliefs or assumptions do you hold with regard to community engagement?

Assumptions – a barrier to dialogue

'Expert' assumptions

The community:

- can't get their heads around complex issues
- is easily influenced by the media
- views are shaped by narrow concerns
- doesn't appreciate the constraints of the process, or
- is mostly apathetic

and therefore …

it is futile if not hazardous to involve the community

DIALOGUE BARRIER

Community assumptions

The experts:

- may have better knowledge on which to base decisions
- have ignored us in the past
- have already made up their minds what they want to do
- don't believe we add value
- are selectively deaf and unscrupulous

and therefore…

our efforts are a waste of our valuable time

2. What other assumptions have you come across in your work?

3. What do you believe are the factors that make community engagement most challenging? (World Café)

The benefits of engaging the community

These are just some of the benefits that are achievable through effective community engagement.

Planned and implemented effectively, community engagement:

- ***Achieves better decisions and results:***
  - Brings more information into a decision
  - Adds more perspectives and expands options
  - Helps to create decisions that are informed, understood, 'implementable' and sustainable
- ***Improves our project management by:***
  - Providing an early warning system for issues
  - Reducing the overall cost of program development or service delivery
  - Providing 2-way communication and opportunities for dialogue
  - Creating a credible channel for timely and accurate information
  - Encouraging modification of decisions before major problems develop
  - Reducing delays while a decision is defended
- ***Meets regulatory requirements:***
  - Sometimes you just have to consult stakeholders or you can't proceed
- ***Facilitates mutual understanding:***
  - Serves as a sounding board for proposed programs
  - Manages single-issue viewpoints
  - Helps to find common ground
- ***Meets stakeholder expectations and values:***
  - People have the right to influence what affects them
  - Provides a method for incorporating stakeholder values into decisions
- ***Builds relationships:***
  - Encourages sharing of positive experiences which builds trust
  - Helps to build long term relationships
  - Helps organisations to move beyond a focus on customer complaints, to working with consumers to ensure services meet needs

Other Concepts

Co-intelligence

Co-intelligence is the name given to the power of working together. The Co-intelligence Institute (www.co-intelligence.org) says that co-intelligence is the ability we have to wisely organise our lives together. The fundamental belief is that all of us together are wiser than each of us as individuals. Community engagement acknowledges and makes use of the wisdom of the group.

Partnership of equals

Community engagement is based on the idea of a partnership of equals, whereby each member of the community of interest has an equal right to participate in decision making processes, and an equal right to put their viewpoint forward.

Case Study 2: Responding to post-natal depression

In an outer suburban area university researchers established that there was a significantly higher than average rate of post natal depression, especially among first time mothers. This data showed up in the health needs assessments of divisions in the area whose boards were subsequently involved in discussions about appropriate ways to respond locally. GPs reported great difficulty in obtaining inpatient mother and baby admissions for their patients with PND and recommended that the most appropriate response would be for the 2 local hospitals to allocate additional beds for this purpose.

At about the same time a staff member from a division in the catchment was involved in an unrelated advisory group at the local level with a "healthy communities, healthy families" focus. An opportunity was available to have consultants who were interviewing local families and service providers about health and other issues include questions about how everyone should respond to high rates of PND. The input did not support allocation of more acute care beds for PND. Instead the interventions and support services requested included:

A change of local council rules which prohibited play groups from using council owned recreation facilities as their base. The main playgroup in the area had a 12 month waiting list for mothers wishing to join and public facilities were not available locally to house additional groups. Cultural issues deterred home based playgroups in the area and as a consequence many mothers were left unconnected to other families.

Improved local public transport for mothers with prams and small children. In the newer housing estates in the area there were poor bus services and train services did not connect local suburbs. Many roads had no footpaths. Many women were left without the use of the family car while their partner was at work and were very isolated as a result.

Outreach services and support groups for teenage mothers. A significant number of teenage mothers lived in the area. Some reported that they felt service providers and older women were judgemental about them and they did not feel comfortable using existing services or groups.

Improved systems for communication between Maternal and Child Health Nurses (employed by local government) and general practice. Nurses routinely screened women for PND but had poor referral pathways to general practice to obtain early medical care for these women.

Local families supported state funding going towards preventive actions over increasing acute facilities.

4. **What assumptions might have been present in the case study? What benefits could community engagement extract in this example?**

The risks and costs of not involving the community

Without good community engagement your process may become entangled in legal and political quagmires. Lawsuits about lack of due process, legislative interventions and other such strategies are signs that individuals or organisations are unsatisfied with the decision-making process.

Sometimes known as “the veto”, concerned individuals and groups have many tools and increasing knowledge and sophistication in slowing down and stopping your decision-making. When solutions are imposed communities will often react.

- They may seek legislative action to undo your decision or even remove your responsibility and control of the decision.
- They might physically disrupt a project, perhaps even endangering safety.
- They may create a public relations nightmare for you and your organisation.

When you assess the costs and benefits of community engagement, you should consider the potential costs of delays, or even the inability to move forward should the public exercise its veto.

This case of post-natal depression is an example of how community expectations can differ from proposed solutions.

Values and community engagement

Values are internal standards by which we all judge events or behaviour—what is good, bad, right, wrong, fair, or unfair.

As individuals, our values govern the way we think things "ought to be." Values are highly personal. The community operates according to its values and priorities. Three categories of values play a significant role as a foundation of community engagement:

- community values and interests
- values of the network of divisions
- community engagement process values (IAP2 Core Values).

Identifying the specific values within each category is imperative to designing an effective process.

5. What are the values held by the DGP that are driving community engagement?

Effective community engagement is based on values

Sustainable decisions about public policy often result from successfully considering diverse values.

Community engagement promotes an orderly process for discussions of diverse values among the various publics and the decision maker.

As practitioners, we are the guardians of the community engagement process. Thus, it is important that we strive to leave aside our personal values related to the scope of the decision or the problem or opportunity to be addressed.

How are values identified?

Community values are identified by researching and analysing these questions as related to the problem/opportunity to be addressed?

1. Who is the 'community of interest'?
2. What does the community care about?
3. What underlying values form the basis of these concerns?

The role of values in community engagement

Three categories of values play a significant role as a foundation of community engagement.

- Community values and interests
- Process owner values
- Process values (IAP2 Core Values).

Identifying the specific values within each category and understanding how they overlap is important to designing an effective process.

What are community values?

Community values are those held by the community or the public. Different people within the community will have different values. Oftentimes, different people share the same values but the importance they place on particular values may affect how they approach a situation. For instance, two people may value aesthetic quality and economic vitality. If one places much higher importance on economic vitality, they may end up with different opinions on expenditures for landscaping on a community project.

What are the divisions of general practice values?

The values held by an organisation are typically influenced by its service mission, or its purpose, and its economic mission, or how it acquires the resources to achieve its purpose. Understanding how the values of the divisions network overlap with the community's values is often important in designing a process that works for both the project process owner (internal publics) and the community (external publics). Commonly held values may also provide the foundation for collaborative problem solving.

Consider the core values of your organisation. How do these influence how you relate to the public?

Examples of values

Some examples of values that may be important to the community and to the process owner are:

Aesthetic quality

■	community, or the common good	■	affordability
■	freedom, or the rights of the individual	■	openness
■	integrity	■	environmental quality
■	sustainability	■	peace
■	fairness	■	professionalism
■	equity	■	fun
■	economic vitality	■	due process
■	public health and safety	■	user pays
■	honesty	■	faith

What are process values?

Process values describe what we mean by good process. Process values drive how we do things, not just what we do. Process values are important because public support for the process is a foundational piece for public agreement on the outcome.

IAP2's Core Values of Public Participation are widely recognised as promoting best practices of public participation (community engagement).

Core values for community engagement

1. The public should have a say in decisions about actions that affect their lives.

- What is the decision to be made?
- How will the decision be made and who will make it?
- Who potentially will be affected by the decision?

There is a correlation between the level of significance and impact the public has on the scope of the decision, problem or opportunity and the benefits derived from effective community engagement.

2. Public participation includes the promise that the public's contribution will influence the decision.

There must be alignment between public expectations for participation and those of the process owner. Until this alignment exists, proceeding with the decision may result in:

- high levels of controversy
- bad will for the process owner
- frustration for everyone and, potentially may stop or stall the project/initiative.

These questions should also be explored:

- given the decision-making process, how can the public affect the decision?
- what commitment is the decision maker willing to make regarding how the public can affect the decision?
- to what degree will the public's defined role in the decision-making process meet their expectations?
- how could the public's role be made more meaningful?
- what do you hope to achieve by involving the public in the process?

3. Public participation promotes sustainable decisions by recognising and communicating the needs and interests of all participants, including decision makers.

- What are the public's concerns and what is the level of their concern?
- How would the public prefer to be engaged?
- What would be the most effective means to obtain/document the public's input?
- How will the public's input be communicated effectively to the decision maker?

4. ***Public participation seeks out and facilitates the involvement of those potentially affected by or interested in a decision.***

- What multiple channels can we use to alert the public to our desire to involve them in the decision-making process?
- How can we identify other potentially affected individuals, organizations or stakeholders?
- What could we do to make it easier for the public to get involved?

5. ***Public participation seeks input from participants in designing how they participate.***

- How can I engage the public in a collaborative effort to design and conduct a public participation process?
- Are there opportunities to use techniques beyond traditional techniques?

6. ***The public participation process provides participants with the information they need to participate in a meaningful way.***

- What are the best means for communicating this information to the public and making it easily accessible?
- What information must be available to members of the public so they understand the nature of the decision to be made and its potential impacts on them?

7. ***The public participation process communicates to participants how their input affected the decision.***

- How can we document to the public that their input affected the final decision?
- How can we demonstrate to the public during the decision-making process that their participation is affecting the outcome?

(These core values have been developed by the International Association for Public Participation – IAP2)

Notes

Notes

Session 3: Planning for effective community engagement

Learning outcomes

At the end of this module participants will be able to:

- recall the importance of scoping an issue or opportunity for community engagement
- identify the implications for poorly scoping a project requiring community engagement
- practice scoping a project for community engagement through working in small groups.
- identify the stages involved in planning for community engagement
- use a process for determining the level of community engagement
- distinguish between project objectives and community engagement objectives
- appreciate the importance of planning prior to considering techniques.

Introduction

We all know planning is important – yet rarely is it taken seriously when it comes to community engagement. It is easy to jump straight to techniques. In this session we will be working through a few simple steps that will help us know what we are 'engaging people about', who we are engaging, and what we hope to achieve by engaging people.

We will also take a look at some common weaknesses related to connecting community engagement with decision-making.

STAGE 1 in the planning process

Identify the decision and the key stakeholders:

- develop an initial description of the issue, the opportunity, the problem or the decision on which you intend to engage stakeholders
- discuss this description with internal stakeholders at the divisions, particularly those who will make the decision. Is there general agreement with your description? If there are differences, what are they? Why do others agree? Why do they disagree? How can the differences be resolved?

Step 1 – Scope the issue; form a decision-statement

We need to start by agreeing on the decision, issue or problem on which we intend to engage the community, and agreeing on who the relevant stakeholders will be. Then we refine the statement of our issue or problem with the community in mind. One of the important steps to successful community engagement is being clear about the issue or question that would benefit from community engagement.

Experienced practitioners have found this to be absolutely critical to establish, as failure to do so will often lead to:

- a series of related or unrelated conversations about which the Divisions Network may be unable to do much
- substantial input obtained that does not actually help the divisions with their decision-making.
- Reinforcement of the view that community engagement processes are not genuine

Issues can be framed in a number of ways.

> Consider the situation in Colarado where farmers discovered a new bait to efficiently kill coyotes (who were killing their livestock). These farmers framed the issue as being about '*how to legalise the new bait*'. Those concerned about possible implication for the bait being introduced to the food chain, believed the issue should have been reframed as being about '*how to kill coyotes*'. Animal welfare groups expressed concern, believing the issue could be reframed as '*how to protect livestock*', whereas others thought it could be reframed as '*how to keep farmers in business*'. Finally, it could also be framed as a dilemma - as 'how farming can co-exist without harming the natural environment'.

What is clear, is that how you frame the issue will contribute to:

- the kinds of solutions that could be investigated
- how various groups will view the engagement, and whether, and how, they may choose to be involved.

ACTIVITY: Identifying the decision to be made

In this activity you have been assigned the responsibility for planning a community engagement program in response to the case study shown on the previous page. Consider the following questions. Note your initial thoughts in the space provided.

1. What is the problem to be solved or decision to be made that requires community engagement?

2. Who will solve the problem? Who will make the decision?

3. What are some of the immediate objectives for community engagement?

Case Study 3: The Seatonville Seat

Background

- The village of Seatonville is located in the Queensland hinterland – inland from the Sunshine Coast. A population of 1,200,the area is experiencing relatively rapid growth of 10% pa.
- In response to requests for help over many years the local DGP had finally lured a GP to the area. Seatonville has been without one for over 50 years!
- The GP moved into 'shop-like' heritage premises in the village. This shop was originally built and run as a general purpose store by a well known and influential family – descendents of the family are still active in the community
- In memory of the founders of the shop a seat was constructed on the footpath – it was located outside the entry to the shop. It is a significant 'landmark' recognising the early days of Seatonville, in honour of those who 'got the village going.'
- The new GP had some issues about the seat, and requested to Council that it be relocated. Concerns were that people would sit on it and smoke, resulting in smoke blowing into the waiting area. Also he expressed concerns about privacy, with outsiders being able to peer directly into the waiting area. The GP felt that patients were not comfortable about this.
- An unfortunate chain of events followed. A Councillor told the relevant family that 'the seat' was being moved (sadly before a decision had even been made). The family was horrified. They approached the doctor in a somewhat aggressive manner. The doctor is now threatening to leave the town over the incident – the powerful family have stated publicly that the town would be better off without 'such a doctor' anyway – especially if he won't honour the heritage of the town. Many people in the town are upset about the prospect of losing the doctor, although their voices have not always been heard.
- There have been reports by the school principal that conflict between children and bullying can be traced to the 'heat about the seat'. Newcomers to the town are desperate to keep the GP; and some of their children have been harassing children related to the powerful family – blaming them for possible robbing the town of its doctor. On one occasion parents of each 'faction' came to blows outside the school – resulting in the police being called.

What next

Two Councillors have been arguing about the matter. The local Councillor is bowing to pressure from the powerful family to advocate for the seat to remain where it is; whereas the other Councillor is pushing for the GP to be 'looked after' given the efforts of the DGP to get one to finally move into Seatonville. The CEO of the Council has asked the DGP to intervene – in the hope that a resolution can be found before it becomes even more politicised in Council.

Stakeholders

- The GP
- The powerful local family
- Council staff
- Councillors
- School Principal
- Police
- Patients/residents

Issues

- Access to primary health care
- Social cohesion
- Heritage
- Demographic change

Step 2 – Identify key issues and link to stakeholders

- Consider the level of impact the decision will have on stakeholders as well as the likely level of controversy of the decision.
- Identify key stakeholders using a systematic approach (Issues and Interests, Stakeholder Classification).
- Refine your definition to include stakeholder interests and issues.

Key issues

What are they? Without being too specific, identify the main issues that are connected with this situation in the table below - first column on the left.

Impact

From the perspective of DGP, what level of impact will this issue have, or is having? In the box below, provide an assessment in the column marked 'Impact' for each of the issues identified.

Controversy

How important will this issue be for each stakeholder? Will the stakeholder be passionate, enthusiastic, or even outraged? For each stakeholder/stakeholder group indicated the strength of feeling about this issue under the column marked 'Controversy'. (Check on the page following the table to see whether you may have missed any potential stakeholders.)

Analyse potential impacts and/or controversy

Who might be impacted or feel passionate about this issues?

	IMPACT	Likely Stakeholders	CONTROVERSY
Issue	Low/Med/High		Low/Med/High

	IMPACT	Likely Stakeholders	CONTROVERSY

Classification of stakeholders

Who is the community?

We can sometimes usefully analyse a particular community by considering the different stakeholders within it and identifying who is most likely to be affected by the outcome of the decision to be made, or the problem to be solved.

Communities (or the public) can be analysed into four categories:

Influencers within the community, such as:

- alternative health service providers
- allied health professionals
- those holding positions of responsibility and trust
- mothers (look at research from Market Access Research for Women's Health Victoria about what sources of health information women rely on: GPs were the most trusted and mothers were very influential)

Mainstream groups, including:

- 85% of Australians who see a GP regularly through the year each year
- parents
- carers

Hard to reach groups such as:

- people without medical insurance
- non-English speaking
- people from linguistically diverse backgrounds
- young people or older people
- Indigenous communities

Other groups such as:

- politicians
- government departments
- general practice representative groups e.g. RDA, AMA, ACRRM, RACGP
- media

STAGE 2 in the planning process: Choosing the appropriate level of influence

We need to clarify the level of influence the community/stakeholders can have on the decision that your organisation is to make. Then set a goal appropriate for the level of engagement and a promise to the community.

Some useful questions

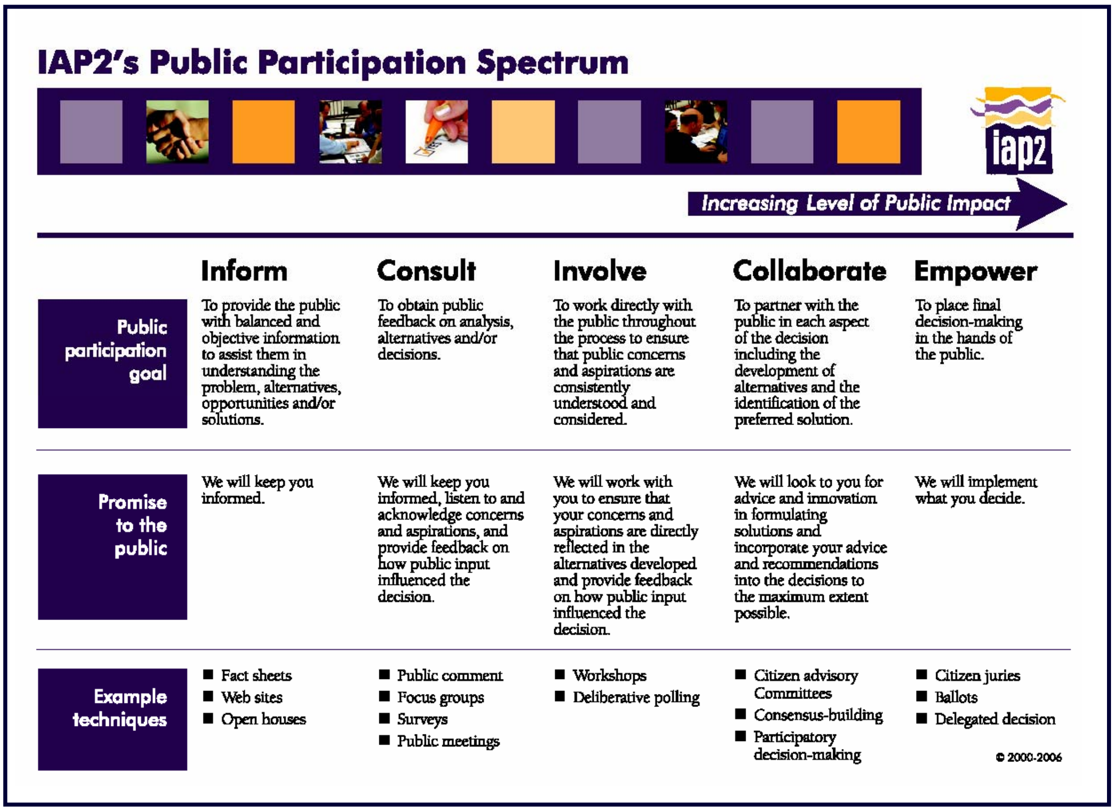
- How does your organisation define the problem to be solved … the decision to be made …. or the issue to be considered by stakeholders?
- Are there different definitions or viewpoints within the organisation?
- What are the root causes of these differences?
- What is the likely level of political controversy on the issue?
- To what degree do stakeholders appear to want to be involved?
- What impact is the decision likely to have on those affected?
- How controversial is the issue likely to be for those affected?
- What is the potential for stakeholders to influence your decisions?
- How significant are the benefits of involving stakeholders?
- How serious are the risks of not involving stakeholders?
- What is the possibility of the media becoming interested?
- Are there sufficient resources and will they be made available to support a participation or consultation program?

Hold meetings

Hold internal meetings with planners and managers to assess their commitment and willingness to involve stakeholders. This is important in an organisation where a number of divisions are involved.

Compare expectations

From the answers to these questions you can get some idea of the level on the Spectrum that your organisation is willing to work. Where on the participation spectrum do you think stakeholders will want to work?



IAP2's Public Participation Spectrum

Increasing Level of Public Impact

	Inform	Consult	Involve	Collaborate	Empower
Public participation goal	To provide the public with balanced and objective information to assist them in understanding the problem, alternatives, opportunities 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	We will keep you informed.	We will keep you informed, listen to and acknowledge concerns and aspirations, 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 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 techniques	■ Fact sheets ■ Web sites ■ Open houses	■ Public comment ■ Focus groups ■ Surveys ■ Public meetings	■ Workshops ■ Deliberative polling	■ Citizen advisory Committees ■ Consensus-building ■ Participatory decision-making	■ Citizen juries ■ Ballots ■ Delegated decision

Make decisions

If your organisation is unlikely to support the level of community engagement desired by stakeholders, select the highest level on the Spectrum that you and your colleagues feel you can work, and then be honest with stakeholders. Consider whether there are other issues that are driving stakeholder's desire for input. Perhaps there are other opportunities for these issues to be addressed.

	Inform	**Consult**	**Involve**	**Collaborate**	**Empower**
Influencers					
Mainstream groups					
Hard to reach groups					
Project Team (staff)					
Decision??					

The guiding principle about the appropriate level for community engagement is that the greater the complexity, the greater the impact and the greater the passion about the issue, the higher up the spectrum you need to go.

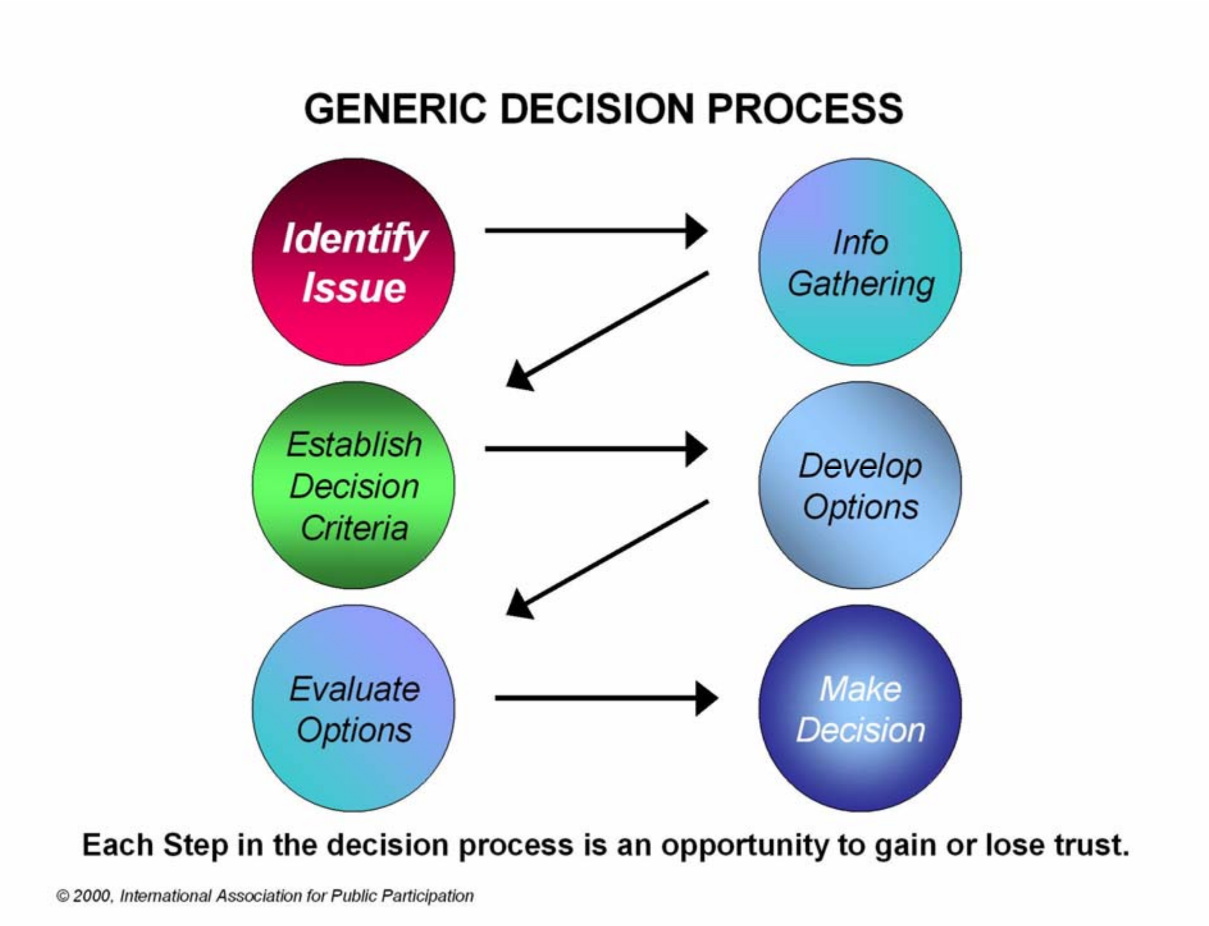
Some suggested levels based on a variety of scenarios:

High complexity + high impact + high passion	= **Collaborate to empower**
Moderate complexity +moderate impact + high passion	= **Involve to collaborate**
High complexity + low impact + moderate passion	= **Consult to involve**
Low complexity + moderate impact + high passion	= **Consult to involve**
Low complexity + Low impact + low passion	= **Inform**

STAGE 3 in the planning process – mapping decision-making processes

Not all decision-making processes are the same. In this stage we clarify the decision-making process for the issue, and then form specific community engagement objectives for each phase of the process.

Mapping the decision process and community engagement objectives

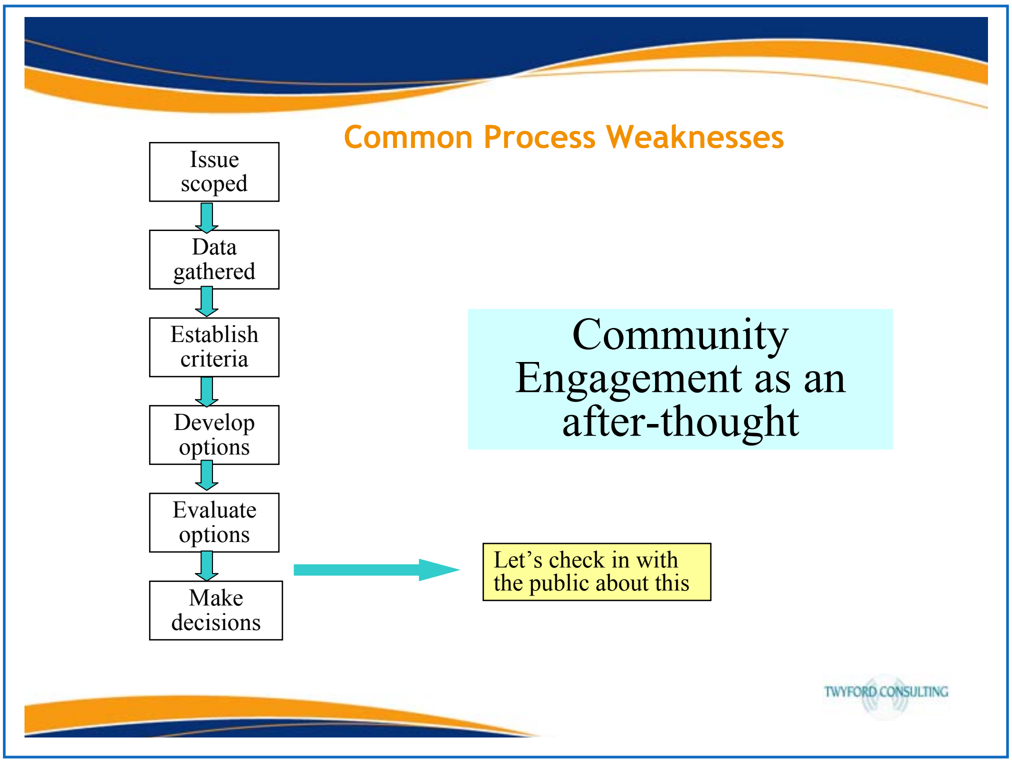


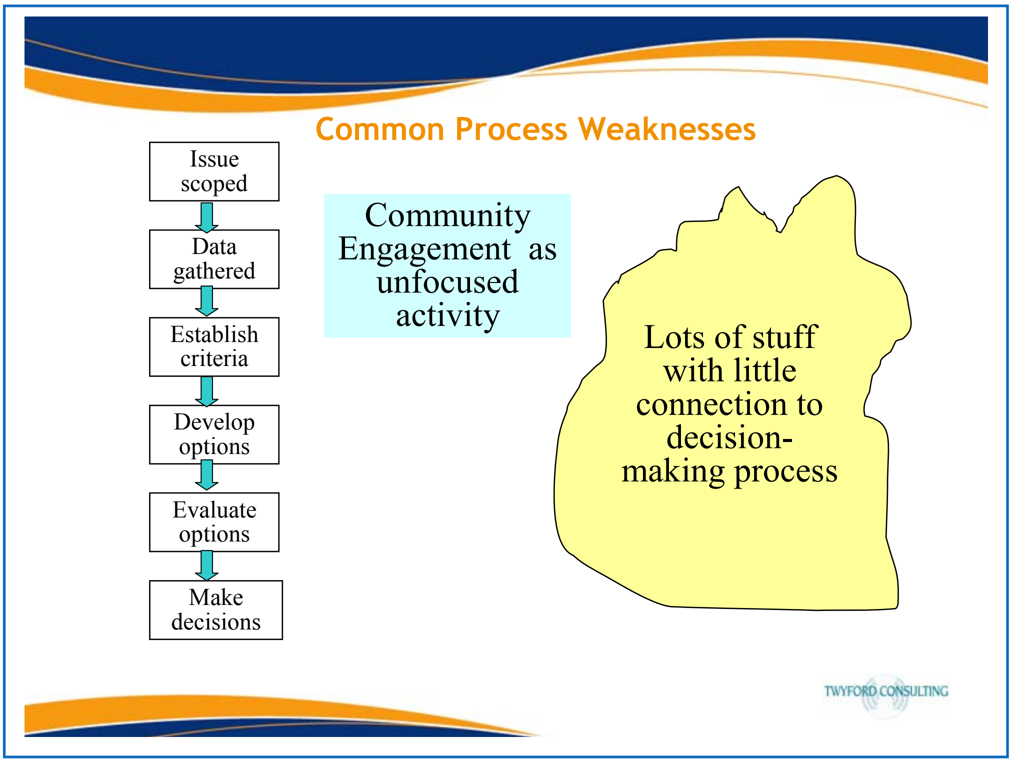
Here is a typical or generic group problem solving process

Where is the divisions network in this process when they embark on consultation processes?

If you wait until after the decision is made, stakeholders have no opportunity to be engaged and, as a result, become cynical about the consultation process.

Some common process weaknesses that show poor links between community engagement and decision-making can be found below.





Project and engagement objectives

What follows is an example of technical objectives for the project at each stage of the decision-making process, matched with typical community engagement objectives at the Involve level of the IAP2 Spectrum. Note that, although some stages are conducted at the Involve level, other stages are conducted at the Consult or Inform levels. It is appropriate to use any of the IAP2 Spectrum levels to the LEFT of the overall level Spectrum level selected.

Project Objective	**Community Engagement Objectives at Involve Level *(samples only)***
STAGE - Decision definition	***Inform***
■ Undertake risk/benefit analysis ■ Scope the project ■ Put together a project team ■ Draft a project plan ■ Establish decision-making process	■ Identify and prioritise stakeholders ■ Inform stakeholders on project ■ Engage in initial dialogue ■ Build relationships ■ Establish trust
Gather information	***Consult***
■ Gap analysis ■ Demographic and social data ■ Economic data ■ Environmental data ■ Engineering data	■ Provide information on project and information needed ■ Share information gathering activities ■ Inform on data gathered and validate ■ Build relationships ■ Evaluate effectiveness of activities
Establish decision criteria	***Involve***
■ Identify possible criteria to be used in making final decision ■ Select appropriate criteria ■ Weight criteria if appropriate	■ Encourage dialogue on values ■ Inform on draft criteria/weightings ■ Obtain feedback ■ Evaluate effectiveness
Develop options	***Involve***
■ Ensure all options are identified ■ Gather as many ideas as possible ■ Be open to all ideas and options	■ Provide information on options ■ Seek feedback ■ Gather ideas and innovation ■ Build trust ■ Evaluate effectiveness of engagement
Evaluate options and recommendations	***Consult***
■ Select the option that best matches criteria ■ Check preferred option with stakeholders	■ Inform on all options heard ■ Obtain feedback ■ Maintain relationships and trust ■ Analyse and summarise feedback ■ Evaluate effectiveness of engagement
Make decision	***Inform/Consult***
■ Make decision ■ Inform stakeholders on decision ■ Develop action plan for implementation	■ Provide information on the decision how it was made and how stakeholder input was used ■ Gain feedback ■ Evaluate process

STAGE 4 in the planning process

Having worked out some specific objectives we then need to work out how these might be best achieved. There are many tools and techniques that can be used (some of these will be covered in Session 4). Other details such as the timing and resourcing of the plan also need to be included.

Key components of a community engagement plan

1. Definition of decision, issue, opportunity or problem
2. Brief history
3. List of key stakeholders
4. Level on the IAP2 Spectrum you have decided to work
5. Community engagement goal and promise to stakeholders
6. Objectives to be achieved through community engagement activities
7. Ways to measure achievement of objectives
8. Community engagement techniques selected to achieve objectives
9. Resources available for community engagement
10. Timing of stakeholder information and engagement activities
11. Roles and responsibilities for undertaking community engagement processes
12. Evaluation plan

Planning to evaluate

It is important to plan how you will evaluate your community engagement process prior to embarking on any engagement activities.

Here are some ideas on how to plan an evaluation.

Evaluate When **Evaluate What**	**During the Stakeholder Engagement Process**	**At the completion of the Stakeholder Engagement Process**
Process	Check each activity against core values Gather data from stakeholders using appropriate tools. Can the next activity be improved?	Check your whole process against process values ■ Which values were met? ■ What contributed to meeting them? ■ Which values were not met? ■ What can be changed next time? ■ How good are the Core Values as an evaluation tool? Do they need reviewing?
Outcomes	Use indicators and targets identified in the planning process to check you have achieved objectives. Gather data from stakeholders and your own team using appropriate measures. Do your objectives for the rest of the process need reviewing?	Use indicators to measure achievement of objectives. Do a debrief with all staff. What worked and what didn't? Why? Summarise data collected throughout the process. What can be improved next time.

Notes

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Session 4: How to do it?

Techniques to use

Learning outcomes

At the end of this module participants will be able to:

- identify key features of a range of possible techniques
- identify the importance of attitude and behaviours when conducting community engagement (rather than merely emphasising the technique itself)
- critique various techniques for given situations.

Introduction

In this session we will take a look at a number of techniques that are used for engaging the community. There are many, many more. Importantly we will also spend some time looking at the kinds of behaviours and attitudes that are most likely to contribute to engagement being done effectively.

Finally we look at one way of comparing techniques against some criteria for community engagement. Let's go!

Engagement objectives

Community engagement is mainly about four things:

1. sharing information with the public
2. listening to input from the public
3. using the input to improve decision-making
4. building relationships with the public.

Engagement purpose	Engagement objective
Share information	We need to provide balance and objective information that is: ■ clear, accurate and understandable ■ formatted and delivered in a way that meets the needs of the intended audiences.
Listening to input from the public	We need to: ■ collect stakeholder input on clearly identified issues/topics using an appropriate tool/mechanism/channel to collect data ■ analyse the input so that it can be summarised in a useful format for the decision makers ■ provide feedback to stakeholders on what was heard and understood from stakeholder input ■ build relationships/trust.
Bring people together to generate dialogue, new ideas and innovation	We need to provide a supportive environment and structured activities so that, when people come together they can: ■ share information safely ■ both speak and listen ■ move out of the here and now and think through what might be and how their ideas and aspirations can offer a new way forward ■ generate positive dialogue ■ be honest about their ideas and reflections.

A note for community engagement practitioners

It is not what tool or technique we pick that matters, it is:

- why we pick what we pick
- how we implement the technique
- what behaviour and attitude we model when we do it.

Demonstrate the magic behaviours of:

- active listening
- sincerity in our responses and actions
- respect for diverse opinions
- transparency and openness.

Facilitator responsibilities in bringing people together:

- get all stakeholders to participate in joint discussion of key elements of decision making
- promote a shared understanding of and respect for different stakeholder values
- promote a shared understanding of the complexity of decision making and the full ramifications of alternative solutions
- establish a complete understanding of the stakeholder community, its values, interests, and concerns
- reach out to all key stakeholder groups
- be able to recognise conditions of balance and imbalance in participation
- processes need to seek balanced representation even if all parties are not participating at the same time or in the same events.

In both selecting and employing our techniques, we are more likely to achieve our community engagement objectives as well as create and maintain positive relationships with stakeholders of the Divisions Network.

'There are no magic techniques,
just magic behaviours'.

1. What techniques do you use now?

2. What techniques have you heard about - are curious about?

World Café

Background

We are going to demonstrate a World Café activity.

We will have a group conversation about community engagement. Imagine you have agreed to attend a meeting to discuss why community engagement is important and the challenges facing the organisation in engaging stakeholders in their strategic and operational decision-making.

Meeting set up

The room should be set up like a Café. It should have small tables that can seat 4 – 6 people preferably covered with check tablecloths, flowers, water jugs and glasses. The aim is to make it feel café-like and create the right atmosphere.

Hosts

Every table has a host. The host can be an internal team member, an independent facilitator or a participant who has been briefed. The host stays at the same table throughout the activity. The host has a responsibility to facilitate the conversation at their table and to take notes of the issues and perceptions raised. These notes can be on a flip chart visually, or on a notepad, or on a laptop computer.

The question

The conversations are facilitated in response to a question. For this activity the question is:

- why is community engagement important to the divisions network and what are the challenges facing it in engaging stakeholders in its strategic and operational decision-making?

It can be useful to have the question written up on a flip chart or on paper on the wall so everyone can see it.

The activity

The participants at each table should introduce themselves. They should then take a minute to think privately about the question and then share their thoughts with others at their table.

After a preset length of time (in our case today 7 minutes), the Convenor or Facilitator will ring a bell or blow a whistle. Everyone but the host moves to another table. The host should ask everyone at their table to introduce themselves and then continue the discussion. The host's responsibility is to keep the discussion flow going and to record the perspectives and issues of the new group.

This activity can be repeated as many times as necessary to ensure that every participant has shared a conversation with a broad cross-section of other participants.

At the end of the activity, the hosts should provide a brief summary of the discussions they have hosted and the common issues and perspectives they have heard. These summaries should be documented and a copy sent to every participant and to the decision makers.

Cardstorming

This activity is useful in gathering input or responses to a question from a large number of people in such a way that everyone feels included and can see their contribution contained within the group's thinking.

Focus question

What have you learned from this course so far?

Rational objective

Participants to understand logical sequence of a Cardstorming Workshop and to examine what they and others have learned.

Experiential objective

Participants to experience the way a Cardstorming Workshop produces outcomes.

Task

First, on your own, write down at least 5 answers to the focus question above.

Second, with the person next to you (groups of 2 or 3) pool your answers and decide on 5 or 6 answers to represent your group.

Write these answers down on the cards handed out to you IN NOT MORE THAN 5 WORDS. Write them in LARGE CAPITAL LETTERS.

Then follow the instructions of the facilitator.

GROUP NAME	GROUP NAME	GROUP NAME	GROUP NAME	GROUP NAME	GROUP NAME

Technology of Participation Workshop - Institute of Cultural Affairs

Public meetings – the common way

For many organisations and members of communities, public meetings are the only acceptable method of undertaking community consultation.

These public meetings are usually designed in the following way:

Venue	**Public or community hall or the local club**
Room set up	Theatre style: ■ chairs set up in rows, so participants only see backs of heads ■ presenters on the stage or raised platform.
Invitation	■ General, through a media advertisement or word of mouth through the community.
Reason people come	■ To oppose something they think has already been decided.
Meeting format	■ 60 – 80% of the meeting devoted to presentation of information ■ 20 – 40% of the meeting devoted to questions/answers.
Likely outcomes	■ Grandstanding ■ Participants pursuing their own agendas ■ Many interested people uncomfortable with format/don't attend ■ Confrontation ■ Not a lot of agreement or agreed forward motion. ■ More heat … less light.

Public meetings, another way

If you HAVE to run a public meeting, here are some suggestions:

Venue	**Neutral venue – no alcohol**
Room set up options	■ Café style, so people are sitting around tables ■ Chairs in circular rows, so participants can see others' faces ■ Presenters at the same level as participants ■ Lots of visual reference material on the issue ■ A staffed welcome table with name tags.
Invitation	■ Personal, with a request to bring anyone else they think might have an interest.
Reason people come	■ Curiosity … to oppose something they think has already been decided.
Meeting format	■ Present ONLY the issue statement or scope ■ Use the first meeting to ASK rather than TELL ■ LISTEN to what people feel, know, think they know and need to know about the issue or decision that is to be made ■ Use the stacking technique so you acknowledge who has something to say and ensure everyone gets their turn. ■ SUMMARISE what you think you heard and check ■ Offer a second meeting to provide information and get feedback ■ Schedule a second meeting at which requested information is provided and feedback sought.
Likely outcomes	■ Venting of emotion including any anger/frustration ■ Surprise ■ Listening from both sides ■ Beginnings of agreement and engagement ■ Development of relationships and early input to the Trust Bank.

Notes

Notes

Community participation techniques

Advisory groups

A body of a fixed number of community members and other stakeholders convened to provide advice to a decision-maker. They meet regularly over time until their task is complete.

Inform	Consult	Involve	Collaborate	Delegate

Context

The Divisions Network might consider using Advisory Groups to:

- to assist with the flow of communication between Divisions and the community over the life of a project
- ensure that they are well informed about community interests and concerns
- help participants to understand the range of perspectives and the complexity of a project/issue
- provide a forum for dialogue in a constructive and informed manner.

Timing

- Planning may take up to several months before the first meeting.
- The Divisions Network needs to clarify the purpose and role of the Advisory Group, including the extent to which they can influence decisions, prior to recruiting members (in some cases – if you are working at the collaborative level you may develop terms of reference with members within the scope of a clearly defined purpose).

Preparation

- Generally terms of reference, or a charter, should be in place before the group begins its work. It should include:
  - purpose of the group and its relationship to the decision-maker
  - composition and size of the group
  - leadership, term limitations, turnover, recruitment and selection
  - decision-making processes
  - meeting frequency and duration
  - roles and responsibilities of members, Divisions Network staff/representatives, and ex-officio's (ie, people who do not vote or involve themselves in making recommendations/decisions).

- relationship to the broader public (are they meant to represent certain interests or groups, or are they there primarily for their skills/perspectives)

- Members of the Advisory Group may need to check with bodies they are meant to represent before committing to a position, or to making recommendations/decisions – there is often a trade-off between speed and inclusiveness of the broader community.

Implementation

- Advisory Groups are often assisted by a trained facilitator who has no vested interest in the outcome of any recommendations or decisions by the group – alternately the groups are chaired by one of the participants.
- Numerous techniques can be used to facilitate dialogue and group processes, such as brainstorming, cardstorming, nominal group technique, dot polling etc.
- Advisory Groups typically meet face to face on a periodic basis. They may also have sub-committees/working groups that pursue specific issues.
- Because of the long-term relationship to the decision-maker, participants need to be regularly informed about how they are adding value and influencing decisions.
- Usually the Division should take responsibility for widespread communication to the broader public throughout the process – perhaps with some direct input by other members of the Advisory Group.
- Field trips can add interest to Advisory Group meetings, especially over long projects.
- The Advisory Group can provide advice about ways to engage the broader public at critical times in the life of the project.

Documentation

- Minutes or least actions/decisions emanating from meetings, need to be documented at all meetings.
- Formal advice/agreements/recommendations should be formally transmitted and read back to the Advisory Group before proceeding.
- Divisions can also document formal responses to recommendations and advice.
- All correspondence with and presentations to the Advisory Group should be documented.

Hints

- Advisory Groups can be seen as captured by Divisions, and sometimes members lose touch with their constituent groups, or the broader public – allow time for them to connect with outsiders to gauge their issues and test directions being pursued. Also clearly spell out the role of members to the broader public in printed material

- Advisory Groups are not only there to give feedback – they often have invaluable local knowledge and insights to improve proposals, and to help the Division "think outside the square".
- Forming a group agreement or 'ground rules' with members can help them to jointly accept responsibility for the style of meetings and the conduct that is acceptable and desirable (eg, learn as much as you can; it is OK to change your mind; listen carefully to others; all participants have something valuable to offer).
- An Advisory Group cannot substitute for broader community participation – don't presume that if the Advisory Group is comfortable with progress that the broader community is as well.
- There may be tensions concerning how the group is formed. Establishing clear criteria will help guide this process – Divisions may invite certain individuals and/or invite people to outline how they meet this criteria through expressions of interest.

Resources

Staffing

- Generally need an independent facilitator whose role is to help the group operate according to their group agreement and according to their charter.
- Administrative support is crucial – someone to document minutes/actions, send out minutes/reports of meetings, send reminders and agendas for the next meeting, and ensure at least simple catering to make the meetings as comfortable and as productive as possible.

Equipment

- Defined according to the needs of the group.

Budget

- Primary cost is personnel support
- Facilitator if external to the organisation
- Catering costs
- Additional costs may include travel expenses for members.

Variations

- Can operate more as a panel of experts to test ideas and gain advice – more often such groups are called Reference Groups
- They go by many different names; you can pick from the following:
  - stakeholder/community/public/citizen
  - reference/advisory/working/steering/consultative/working
  - group/committee/board/task force/council/action team/ group.

Citizen Jury

(Sometimes known as Community Panel - some elements in common with the Consensus Conference and Deliberative Poll)

A process that gathers a randomly selected and demographically balanced panel of community members for up to 4 days to carefully examine a complex issue. The jury makes recommendations to the decision-maker.

Inform	Consult	Involve	Collaborate	Delegate
		■	■	■

Context

Divisions might consider using a Citizen Jury when:

- there is a controversial and /or complex decision confronting divisions
- there is difficulty deciding between two plausible options
- there is a need to constructively involve professionals/technical experts, members of the community, and interest groups in a process
- the divisions network is prepared to publicise the work of a jury and publicly respond to that piece of work.

Timing

- Requires time to inform the broad community of stakeholders about the project and to gain their support for this process.
- Takes several months usually to gain support, recruit jury members, develop pre-reading and select witnesses/experts.
- Jurors and witnesses need time to prepare for the sittings/presentations.

Preparation

- Inform the broader community about the project.
- Commission skilled and experienced facilitators of deliberative processes.
- Brief a range of relevant stakeholders about the role of the jury and proceed only with substantial support.
- Seek nominations to form a stakeholder steering committee to oversee the project.
- Recruit independent social research company to recruit jury members – usually about 14-18.

- Advise those selected about arrangements for the jury sitting days and their task – also advise concerning any payment arrangements.
- Decide upon involvement of and coverage by media, and establish liaison.
- Arrange seating for jury, gallery, and media with break out rooms for deliberation times – ensuring that jury is not distracted by gallery or media. Their focus should solely be upon the witnesses/experts.
- Ensure that a balanced range of stakeholders are well briefed about their task, the charge being considered by the jury, and time they have to present their messages, allowing ample time for questions from the jury.

Implementation

- Facilitator works with jury to clarify roles and responsibilities of jurors and presenters.
- Schedule is prepared for presentations to jury with time allowed for jury deliberation – no more than 6 presentations per day is advised.
- Presentations are made to the jury, punctuated by deliberation periods.
- For longer, larger processes a separate facilitator for the jury may be appointed, with a moderator managing the overall process.
- The commissioning body – in this case a Division – should be available also to answer questions; it is essential that the process is designed for the benefit of jurors; The Division is there to assist - not to control.
- Facilitator works with jury to deliberate at conclusion of sitting days, and usually assists the jury to prepare their report with their recommendation(s).
- Consensus is desirable – if it cannot be achieved than this can be reflected in the final report.
- The Report of the jury should be made available to the community within one month and a reply to that Report by the Division also made publicly available (containing reasons for whether their recommendation has been accepted or not).
- Media coverage can help to connect the work of the jury to the broader public.

Debrief

- Following the day of deliberation, and after the report has been finalised, it will be opportune to review the process.
- A survey of the jurors, and presenters, concerning the process would help with reflections on about the value of this approach to community participation.
- What improvements could be made in future?
- Did the process meet the objectives of the community participation plan?

- Did it complement other forms of community participation in relation to this issue?
- Was the promise to the community kept?

Documentation

- A tape recording of proceedings can be helpful.
- One page summaries of key points from presenters will help jurors recall their main messages – along with some of their own space to make notes along the way.
- The only product needed from the deliberations is the final report of the jury.
- For transparency, it is essential that the Division agrees beforehand to provide the report to the public – perhaps through papers – and to respond to it. This helps build trust in the process.

Resources

Staffing

- Needs a project manager for the Division and at least one independent facilitator.
- Jurors need administration support and coordination – this can be extensive at the conclusion while the Report is being finalised.

Equipment

- Presentation equipment
- Recording equipment (optional)
- Venue and space
- Areas for jurors, presenters, gallery and media
- Break out area for jurors to deliberate
- Folders with presentation summaries, key background reading material, and paper for note taking

Budget

- Usually jurors are compensated for their time – otherwise only certain groups will be prepared to accept the invitation, making it most unlikely that a balanced microcosm of the community will be achieved.
- Catering for the sitting and deliberation day(s).
- Venue hire, recording equipment.
- Independent facilitator(s).
- An independent research company should recruit jurors.

Variations

- Some authorities in Australia prefer the term 'Community Panel', although the term citizen's jury has been used here, and is used extensively in the U.S. and the U.K.
- If using at the delegate level the Division would agree in advance to do whatever the jury recommends – this is fairly unusual although it has occurred.
- Although most juries sit between two to four days, this is just a guide.
- To reduce cost the Division could ask for Expressions of Interest to sit on the Jury – however this weakens the value of the method. There are some more affordable ways of achieving a random sample, such as choosing certain houses in streets that are spread according to demographic profile.
- The number of jurors can be reduced to reduce costs.

Hints

- Gain the support of stakeholders and maintain it throughout – they should be actively involved in determining the charge, approving pre-reading material, selecting balanced range of presenters, and supporting the event itself.
- Organise a field trip before the sittings days as part of the jurors briefing
- Ensure that the Division at no point can be accused of interfering with the process – its strength lies in its independence, as well as the time to deliberate, and the ability to scrutinise those providing evidence.

References

The Jefferson Centre, Boston US – www.jefferson-center.org
The Institute for Public Policy Research – www.ippr.org.uk

Delivering printed material

Printed materials delivered to residents are prepared to inform the community, usually on mass, about projects of general interest, and to advise people about ways they can participate or find out more information. Printed information can be in the form of newsletters, fact sheets, flyers or letters.

Inform	Consult	Involve	Collaborate	Delegate

Context

The Division might consider using Printed Information:

- to provide general information, and key facts, to the broader public about a project, action or other matter
- to complement media releases, web site information – multiple exposures can create more interest.

Timing

- the editing process can take time if not well managed – make sure that the dates in the printed material are still realistic before sending to printers.

Preparation

- Confirm that printed information will help meet your community participation objective.
- Identify the key messages for the printed material.
- Address the basics of who, what, where, when, why and how in the communication.

Implementation

- Only send to graphic designers (if using them) when text is agreed to – changing text on the graphic layout is frustrating, slow and may require substantial reconfiguring of the lay-out.
- Use ample 'white space' and a suitable font to make it easy to read.
- Use photos, illustrations or maps to create interest.

- Provide staff contact details so that people can find out more – refer to hotline information or any opportunities for people to become involved.
- Follow the Division's protocols for achieving sign-off – usually someone is responsible for coordinating comments on the first draft.
- The Division will have a method for printing and mass distribution of printed material.
- Having staff available to cover hotlines after distribution is important – you can expect substantially more interest within the first week of the material being delivered.

Documentation

- Keep a record of printed material.
- Feedback to printed material should be documented – including people using a hotline in response to reading printed material (it is always useful to find out how people first become interested in a project).

Resources

Staffing

The AGPN may have access to staff who are skilled and experienced in preparing media releases – use them to get ideas, proof read, and edit. Seek them out.

Budget

- Costs will vary according to size of distribution, number of colours/quality of print, length of material and level of professional art work required.
- Allow for cost of delivery
- Allow for reply paid cost (if appropriate).

Variations

- In addition to sending to letterboxes, post office boxes, printed material can be made available at libraries, corner shops, community centre and as inserts in school newsletters.

Hints

- The material should be clearly identified as important information supplied by the Division.
- Material in a Division envelope, clearly identifying the project or issue is more likely to be read.

- Use plain English – avoid jargon and/or explain terms in an easily found glossary.
- Don't fill up the page with too much text – it is too much for most people to take in.
- Use bullet points and plenty of white space.
- Check, double check and triple check all the important details! One error un-does all the rest of the good work.
- Deliveries through Australia Post are generally effective and affordable.
- Give at least two weeks notice for distribution.
- Avoid deliveries in school holidays, especially at Christmas.
- Consider using reply paid envelopes if you are seeking written responses – such as a brief survey.

Focus groups

A focus group is a small, facilitated group discussion where about 5-12 people are brought together to explore attitudes about a particular topic of interest.

Inform	Consult	Involve	Collaborate	Delegate
	■			

Context

A Division may choose to organise focus groups to:

- identify and define the needs of a specific group
- identify problems in project implementation
- obtain perceptions of project outcomes and impacts
- generate new ideas
- identifying what people know or don't know.

Timing

- Focus Groups usually last about two hours each.
- It takes several weeks to organise as participants need to be recruited – this is best done by an independent research group, who will pay participants for their time.

Preparation

- Determine what information you need to know, and how this will support the community participation objective.
- Develop the questions that will guide the focus group process – it may be worthwhile to involve your stakeholders in the process of forming questions.
- Arrange a venue where members of the Focus Group will be comfortable, and can interact with each other. A u shaped arrangement, or having members at small tables (cabaret style), is common for focus groups.
- Consider ways to construct the focus groups – you may choose to divide them according to age, gender, location or area of interest.
- Ensure a budget that covers the costs of recruiting and payment of attendees (note that fees are really just a reimbursement of expenses, and therefore that are not required to pay tax on the amount provided).

Implementation

Typically a focus group will involve:

- ensuring focus group recruits are comfortable, and introduced to each other
- clarifying the purpose of the focus group and the agenda for the session
- providing some basic information and a context for which the questions are being asked
- posing questions and allowing for some individual thinking time
- providing an opportunity for the group to interact and then attempt to form some conclusions about the topic being explored.

Documentation

- Recording sessions can be useful for the transparency of this research method.
- Flip chart and individual index cards can also be used for recording.
- Individual surveys or voting with stickers can also register the preferences or views of the group members.
- Consensus is usually not required or deemed necessary for focus group research.

Hints

- Maintain energy by using a variety of methods to get the most out of your participants.
- Help participants to get to know each other early to 'break the ice'.
- Recognise the diversity of perspectives – view them as healthy for the process.
- Have good coffee/refreshments available.

Debrief

- A survey of the participants concerning the process would be useful in reviewing the focus group process and outcomes.
- What improvements could be made in future?
- Did the process meet the objectives of the community participation plan?
- Did it complement other forms of community participation in relation to this issue?

Resources

Staffing

- An independent facilitator is usually required – if not an impartial and suitably skilled staff facilitator without a 'direct' interest in the project may be used.
- A staff member assisting to record questions and collect output can help support the facilitator – although most facilitators can record focus groups as they go.
- Organising the focus group is usually left to the social research company, although it is a good idea to work out whether the Division or the Research Company will arrange venue, physical payment to the group members, and catering.

Equipment

- Flip charts/index cards or other tools to record small group outputs.

Budget

- Costs will vary depending on numbers participating, the venue selected and the standard of catering.
- Usually focus group attendees will be paid about $50-100 each for their time.

Space and room set up

- Set up for multiple small group efforts.

Variations

- There are many tools that can be used within the workshop process. Here are just a few:
  - ORID method of conversation
  - Cardstorming
  - small group work
  - psycho-drama techniques – eg; members positioning themselves along a line to indicate their level of support for a particular statement.

Hotline

Hotlines are a widely advertised telephone number that provides information and directs callers to the person who can answer their questions. It can also be used to register participants for workshops, or other forms of community participation.

Inform	Consult	Involve	Collaborate	Delegate

Context

A Division might consider using a Hotline:

- to provide an easy and affordable way for members of the community to find out more information
- to offer updated information on a project
- take specific enquiries from callers
- answer questions from the public
- help identify common concerns or issues from which to develop a question and answer sheet or page on web site.

Timing

- Establish the telephone number at the start of the project. It may be a dedicated number or the number of a person dedicated to responding to calls about the project.

Preparation

- Determine the features of the hotline – toll free? What hours will it be operated? Answering machine out of hours? Menu-driven?
- Develop a policy for how calls should be handled.
- Prepare those answering calls to be able to handle 80% of enquiries – that need to be well informed and know who to refer calls to if they cannot answer a question or comment on an issue adequately.
- Implementation.
- Hotlines are easy to set up. Either Telstra or Optus can arrange a Hotline number within a couple of days.
- Special equipment may be needed if multiple answering mechanisms are to be used.

- Designate the person(s) to answer the phone or to collect messages. Messages need to be checked daily and responded to promptly.
- Hotlines need to be well publicised to be effective.

Documentation

- Keep a log of all calls; name, time, date and nature of enquiry. Make sure to include what action was taken as a result of the call.
- Prepare a Record of Conversation, and for those enquiries forwarded, follow up to make sure that the caller receives the information they seek as soon as possible.
- The information received from a hotline should be reviewed for specific or recurring questions. You may want to adjust your community participation program as a result of feedback gained through the hotline.
- Establish a database of comments that can be referred to by subject or geographic area – this should become part of the system for reviewing the project – a standing agenda item.

Resources

Staffing

- No special skills are needed to establish a hotline – it is set up by the relevant telephone company.
- The person answering calls needs to be well prepared – to answer most anticipated questions.
- If the hotline is merely an answering machine, messages must be retrieved daily. The greeting and information on the messages should change frequently, so callers feel that the project is alive and progressing.

Equipment

- Work with the telephone company to design the best system for your needs and budget.

Budget

- A call centre set up can be used to administer telephone surveys.
- Costs will vary depending on the complexities of the system, use of standard or toll-free number and the staffing plan.
- The initial set up cost should be lower than $100, with a monthly connection rate, and a rate for calls accepted (if toll-free is set up).

Variations

- Integrate the hotline with other techniques to publicise meetings and events.
- Use it as a way of receiving RSVP's for an event.
- Use the hotline to prepare a mailing list – ensuring to gain permission from callers first to comply with privacy legislation.

Hints

- Callers may become frustrated by a recorded message – allocating well informed people to take calls is preferable – especially during peak periods of interest.
- TDD (telecommunications device for the deaf) services make hotlines accessible to people with hearing or speech impairments.
- Hotlines need to be well publicised to be useful.
- Don't waste the information collected or the feedback received – valuable insights can be gained through hotlines and you may hear messages from people who might otherwise be silent, or simply not attend, public meetings.

Media releases

A media release is a short written piece provided to the media to take interest in your story. Usually it's a one-page fax or email sent to selected media outlets that briefly outlines your news and invites them to give exposure to your news and to contact you for further information.

Inform	Consult	Involve	Collaborate	Delegate

Context

A Division might consider using a Media Release:

- to provide information to the broader public
- to sustain the broader public's interest in a project
- to advise about the achievement of a significant milestone in a project (such as the opening of a new facility by the Mayor)
- to provide a different perspective on a story/project that has been receiving publicity

Timing

- Papers and radio will provide you with information about their deadlines to consider your media releases.
- TV would ideally like good visuals before midday. That gives them time to edit the story back at the station while leaving reporting crews available for late breaking factory fires in the evening.

Preparation

- Your release has 2 objectives - getting your story into the media, and ensuring they get your message right. The first point requires that you make it easy for the journalists to pursue your 'interesting' story. The second point requires that your media release clearly captures your key messages.
- Agree on your key message. What do you want to say to whom? PR people often refer to 'key messages' - 2 to 4 key points that you want to make. These should each be distilled to a single sentence and can then become the basis of your media release.
- Make it easy for the media to run the story – preparing a written media release and supplying a photo can help.

- Get to know the key people in the media who will make decisions about what goes in. For example, a positive relationship can mean that they may even run their edited story past you before they go to print.

Implementation

- Once you have identified key messages, draft a one-page media release.
- Insert some quotations to make it readable and personable.
- Get some feedback from colleagues, or even better still, friends or family, to see if it creates sufficient interest for them to want to read it.
- Follow the protocol within the Network of Divisions for issuing the Media Release.
- Follow up your release with a phone call. Call the newsroom and ask to speak to the person in charge to see if a journalist has been assigned to the story. Ask to speak to them to 'talk about the story' rather than just asking if they are going to use it'. This is a very important step, and your chance to discover and nurture sympathetic journalists. Be ready and willing to send them further information.

Documentation

- Keep a record of the media release – compare with the actual coverage in various papers.
- Maintain a database of key media contacts – community radio, print and TV for following up, making sure that you are not cutting across the work of your public relations staff.

Resources

Staffing

- The DGP will have staff skilled and experienced in preparing media releases – use them to get ideas, proof read, and edit.

Budget

- The media do not charge you for a media release.
- An alternative is to pay for an Advertorial – this will cost you around $500 for half a page in a local newspaper (eg Penrith Star) up to $20,000 dollars for a major paper (eg, Sydney Morning Herald)

Variations

- Pay to insert an Advertorial, which will ensure that your message is printed exactly as you want it to be.

Hints

- You need a 'hook'. No matter how convincing a collection of old facts may be, you will not get into the media without a 'hook'. A 'hook' can be something new, something original, a great photo or video opportunity, some newly released statistics, a first, something that will make a story! A few key facts can be attached to press release to add to the credibility of the ‘story’.
- Remember that many people only read the first few lines of an article. Make sure the most important messages are up there!
- Appoint a spokesperson responsible for media contact and brief them. Journalists tend to want to talk to the person who is best informed about the story. They will have little interest in divisions protocols about who is allowed to talk with whom.

Notes

Open House

An informal setting with multiple displays where participants view information on set topics at each display or station and discuss the topic with project representatives.

Inform	Consult	Involve	Collaborate	Delegate
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Context

The DGP might consider using an Open House:

- to improve understanding about a project
- to obtain feedback to a proposal, or input on a project
- to provide opportunities for members of the community to ask questions on a one to one basis.

Timing

- Select a block of time convenient for different types of people in the community (eg, cater for commuters as well as young people, parents of young children and older people).
- Length may be from several hours to several weeks – depending on the scale of the project, budget resources and the interest expressed by members of the community.
- Attendees can arrive at any time during the open house.
- Consider the amount of time needed to review materials available, and provide enough staff for one to one conversations where possible.

Preparation

- Reserve a familiar local space, such as a library, shopfront or local community centres/halls.
- Consider using more than one location and date for large geographic areas or if anticipating strong interest.
- Determine objectives for Open House and ensure match with community participation objectives.
- Identify topics and messages to be covered; identify key resource people.
- Draft descriptions of displays and material and review; preferably using some people who do NOT know a great deal about the project – adapt materials accordingly.

- Advertise and promote the Open House widely.
- Plan for equipment (such as lap top and projector) in case additional information can be provided in that way).
- Plan to offer refreshments to visitors.
- Review key messages and potential questions with project team.

Implementation

- Set up room well in advance – ensuring displays are easy to find, and in a logical order.
- Provide chairs and tables for people to sit and review documents.
- Aim to provide a comfortable, friendly and interesting setting.
- Review question and answer resource material.
- Greet visitors/attendees; ask them to sign in and provide basic orientation to the Open House.
- Introduce staff present and their areas of expertise.
- Invite people to make comments at the 'comment station' or to fill in a survey – ask questions in the survey about the helpfulness of staff, the quality and clarity of displays, as well as the project itself.

Debrief

- Check in at the end of every session or day as to what is working and what could be improved.
- Read comments made with surveys/comments station.
- Consider how input/feedback might help ongoing community participation, and inform the project itself.

Documentation

- Comments cards or surveys should be used as a record of community perspectives of the project.
- Attendee sign in sheets.
- A written summary of the event by the project team.

Resources

Staffing

- It is not always easy to determine the right number of staff – too many is overwhelming for attendees, whereas insufficient can leave people frustrated at now being able to talk with staff – it is wise to have people on stand-by who can come as the need arises.
- Include some 'floaters' – key staff who can move around and check how things are proceeding.
- Assign people to greet and register attendees, and to ensure that attendees leave a record of their thoughts at the end.

Equipment

- Plenty of easels, hanging spaces
- Static displays – bigger the better usually
- Maps and photographs are useful
- Story boards about the history of the project and area
- Presentation equipment
- Easily accessed venue(s)
- Signs directing people to comments station where they can leave comments
- Simple catering
- Copies of material about the project for people to take away with them
- Arrange stations/displays clockwise from entrance – this is the most 'natural' way for people to move around once they enter
- No fixed seating – an open space that can be freely arranged
- Tables and chairs near refreshments area

Budget

- Primary cost is staff time
- Exhibits and displays
- Hiring of venue(s) if required

Variations

- If a public meeting is to be held in conjunction, it can be useful to run an open house beforehand. This provides an opportunity for people to find out what they need to know without having to speak up in front of a large group of people.
- If you expect to be inundated you may plan some briefing sessions at certain points throughout the open day – if you are overwhelmed with people

unexpectedly it may not be possible to hold one to one conversations with all, in which case you may choose to conduct a small meeting immediately

Hints

- Be ready for arrivals as soon as you open for business.
- Choose a venue and room size based on level of interest expected.
- Consider hosting in several locations to assist geographic access.
- Spread hours for the open house to allow different groups to attend.
- Have staff on stand-by in case you are flooded with interest unexpectedly.
- Ensure display are informative without being persuasive in nature (in other words; don't tell people what they should think about it – inform them so they can form their own views).
- Supply aerial photos – most people love them!
- Make sure ideas that are presented are clearly marked as drafts if you are seeking feedback and intend to modify elements of the project.
- Strive to make it a friendly experience alongside of helpful information.
- Analyse feedback and identify themes for particular groups of people – this should be used to inform the development of the project.

Resident Feedback Register (RFR)

The Register is a randomly selected database of residents or consumers that is created to give feedback to an organisation about services, priorities or contentious issues. Although sometimes referred to as a 'panel' this group of residents or consumers may not ever gather together physically - it is a not a committee. Rather it is a register of thoughtful and willing citizens who can be utilised by the organisation as required to complement its community participation program.

Inform	Consult	Involve	Collaborate	Delegate
	■	■	■	

Context

The DGP may establish a Resident Feedback Register:

- when they wish to complement self selected community participation with randomly selected participants (in other words, to involve the silent majority of people in thinking about an issue and not merely responding to the views expressed by the well organised and articulate)
- to gain feedback from community stakeholders over a variety of issues over a period of time
- as part of the way the Divisions Network consults the broader community in an ongoing way – views from the register can be made public and responded to publicly by the Network
- to enable the broader community to identify some priorities for the Network to consider in developing their plan of management.

Timing

- A Resident Feedback Registers can be established fairly quickly with the assistance of a Social Research Company.
- Gaining support for the Resident Feedback Register is important – using an independent company will help allay any cynical concerns of the organisation 'handpicking' residents to get the answer they want.
- Resident Feedback Registers may be ongoing – the involvement of any resident might be capped at two years – in the UK some similar groups have two year terms, with half retiring each year to allow from some continuity.

Preparation

- Ensure that an community participation objective has been established, and that a RFR will help you to achieve it.
- The project team should identify clear objectives for using a RFR – for example Brisbane City Council used a large register to find out the level of support for different strategies to address traffic problems (eg, public transport options as opposed to building bigger and better motorways, and car parks).
- Determine the method of recruiting the Register – using either a random selection or a self selection process. Random selection will be more expensive, especially if using a social research company to recruit. However it may be more useful and credible.
- The sample should be demographically representative, with participant details recorded, such as name, address, gender, age, occupation, ethnicity, rural/urban and special needs.
- Identifier codes are used to collection and analysis of information – with the anonymity of register members maintained throughout.
- Inform the broader public about the creation of the RFR and how the Divisions Network intends to use it – it may be project specific – or used to provide feedback on a wide range of projects or issues.

Implementation

Once the Register is recruited the DGP can:

- issue surveys on various topics to the RFR – depending on the nature of the survey it may be decided to only issue the survey to a particular section of the RFR – such as people aged between 18 and 30
- Enter RFR member responses, and then analyse. A report should be prepared and made available to the broader community, and forwarded to decision-makers for a response. Alternately the report can be incorporated into a data collection/analysis stage of a community participation process.

Documentation

A record should be kept of:

- how recruitment was undertaken
- key characteristics of each member on the RFR
- surveys put to the RFR
- their responses on a database
- a report formed from an analysis of surveys
- action taken as a result of the RFR being utilised for each issue.

Hints

- Surveying the RFR before and after providing more information can be useful to test whether people are inclined to change their minds about issues when they are sufficiently educated about them.
- Make sure stakeholders support the ways questions are put to the RFR – biased questioning will dramatically and adversely affect the credibility of the survey.
- Involve the broader public by publicising their role and using the media to cover the way the RFR added value to decision-making.

Debrief

- A survey of the RFR participants about their experience being involved could generate learning for the Divisions Network.
- Feedback from decision-makers and project managers could also help to identify the value added to decisions by the RFR.

Resources

Staffing

- A single staff member, or two, to manage the RFR would be ideal.
- Recruiting could be done in house or through a Social Research Company.

Equipment

- A PC with the database, and software for analysis data is all that is required.

Budget

- RFR's are fairly inexpensive to establish and maintain.
- The cost of posting surveys can be reduced by using email surveys (at least for a reasonable sample of the RFR)

Variations

- Drawing a sample from the RFR to form Focus Groups, a Citizens Jury or to conduct a Deliberative Poll.

References

2002 (Lyn Carson ed.) "Consult your community: A Handbook. A guide to using the residents feedback register".
Planning NSW Sydney

Surveys/social research

Random sampling of the population, conducted often by telephone or mail, to gain a statistically valid specific information in relation to a give project or issue.

Inform	Consult	Involve	Collaborate	Delegate

Context

The Divisions Network might consider using Surveys/Social research:

- to gain a more accurate idea about the broader community's views about an event, project, proposal or issue
- to provide a balance to input being offered by the more articulate, vocal sections of the community
- to gain an appreciation of the level of understanding concerning specific developments
- to gauge values and attitudes of the broader community

Timing

- Response to mail outs is often slow and there is higher level of self selection – so it is less statistically valid than telephone surveys.
- Social and marketing research companies prefer telephone surveys as they are efficient, computerised, less expensive, more statistically reliable, and more flexible (ie, an interrupted call can be registered on system and the interview can be completed later on – even by a different caller).
- Avoid extremely busy periods of the year when there is heavy volume of calls and mail.
- Avoid calling at meal time, before 8am and after 9pm.
- Once a questionnaire is drafted a computer assisted telephone survey can be undertaken within two weeks, including provision of a report.

Preparation

- Review community participation objectives to ensure that a survey will help achieve them.

- Evaluate the risk of completing the survey – how will it be perceived by the community? How will you ensure the integrity of the research? How will you manage perceptions of bias?
- Clarify how you intend to use the data and, if working at *involve* to *collaborate* level, seek agreement about this with key stakeholders.
- Consider engaging a social research company – they will do the work more quickly, accurately and can make helpful suggestions – they may also be seen as more independent concerning the matter being researched.
- Identify the topics to be explored, and the questions you hope to gain some more knowledge about.
- Frame survey questions clearly, concisely and without 'leading' the respondent.
- Ensure that survey will take no longer than about 5 minutes.
- Identify random selection pool/methodology.
- Determine sample size; establish survey timeline, including administration, compilation, analysis and documentation of results.
- Review questions for bias – run questions past stakeholders until they are satisfied about the neutrality of the process.
- Conduct a test survey, revise as needed – making sure that respondents are not confused about what they are being asked.
- Restrict open ended questions to one or two - they are more complex and it is more costly to record and analyse.
- Test system for recording responses – computer assisted is the quickest and most accurate system.

Implementation

- Publicise upcoming survey.
- Four contacts for a mail survey – advance notice letter, survey form, thank you letter and reminder postcard, and follow-up letter with additional survey form to those who have not yet responded.
- For telephone surveys a cover page detailing identification, call records and help sheets offering advice for situations callers may encounter.
- Enter survey data into a coded data base and prepare summaries.
- Use a software system that allows you to cross tabulate specific information – for instance to test where there are differences according to location, gender, age group and income levels.
- Analyse data with the survey team.
- Document results and include an executive summary with the main points identified.

- Share survey results with stakeholders and use the survey to inform ongoing community participation.

Debrief

After the survey review:

- What went well?
- What could be improved?
- Were any questions confusing?
- What did we learn?
- How can we make the most of what was learnt?
- How well did the survey contribute to our community participation objectives being met?

Documentation

- The entire process needs to be well documented, including the rationale for the survey and the sample being used, a copy of the survey questions, information provided to survey team and the data analysis.
- A report which details the survey findings and an executive summary or overview.

Resources

Staffing

- The most important consideration is whether the Divisions Network buys some expert assistance – in most cases this is advisable.
- Universities and social research companies are usually available to undertake this work.
- A project manager will need to drive and guide the process – it is important that the Divisions Network is perfectly clear about the purpose of the research and how it fits with the community participation process.
- Obtaining 200 responses will take about 133 person hours - with surveys taking about 20 minutes each to record.
- Including people outside the project team to analyse survey data can increase the legitimacy of the results.

Equipment

- Database software to hold survey records and to conduct analysis/cross tabulations.

- Space and room set-up.
- A call centre set up can be used to administer telephone surveys.

Budget

- A significant budget will be required to produce a statistically valid survey – to administer, analyse and produce report.

Variations

- Make survey instruments available at Open Houses, public meetings, workshops and other events where people receive information about a project.
- Use a Web-Based Survey and send the link for it via email to the survey pool; a Web-based survey eliminates the need for staffing, but not all of the sample will have ready internet access.
- Conduct surveys as part of a Resident Feedback Register.

Hints

- Mailed surveys must be professionally laid out and must have eye appeal.
- Consider a centralised location for making survey calls to promote efficiency and consistency.
- An advance letter mailed to phone survey subjects increases their willingness to take part; include project information and how to get more information in advance of the letter – in this way you may get a more informed response.
- Gaining stakeholder approval for the questions, the group conducting the survey, and analysis findings will increase the legitimacy of the research undertaken.

Notes

Workshops

A workshop is a general term used for an interactive meeting of community members and other stakeholders with Divisions Network representatives to explore issues, generate possible solutions, or synthesise information to form recommendations for action. Independent, skilled facilitators are often used to facilitate workshops, although the Divisions may choose to use a suitably skilled member of staff who has the confidence of all participants.

An approach that can include many different tools and approaches, (such as World Café, Samoan Circle, Open Space Technology, Cardstorming).

Inform	Consult	Involve	Collaborate	Delegate

Context

The Divisions Network may choose a workshop when:

- there is a need to actively involve a wide range of people to make substantial progress on a particular matter
- they have identified that it's appropriate to work at the 'involve' level or higher.
- broad community/stakeholder wisdom is likely to add value to the decision-making process.

Timing

- It is important to provide at least two weeks notice for participants – preferably about one month. Short notice sends the wrong message – that the Divisions network does not value the time of participants or their schedules, and may not genuinely want them to be involved.
- Workshops, at the minimum, will take two hours, but may up to two days.
- Sending a summary of output to participants within two weeks of the completion of the workshop helps to build trust and accountability for what was achieved.

Preparation

- Ensure that an community participation objective has been established, and that a public meeting will help you to achieve it.
- The project team should identify a clear purpose and some objectives for the public meeting.

- Broad advertising of the public meeting is essential – use posters for places frequently visited places such as corner shops, shopping centre community notice boards, and libraries. Fliers can be sent out through the network's mail outs and through other forms of printed material.
- Organise a venue that is considered to be accessible and neutral.
- require several facilitators. Typically for large workshops the purpose is to identify issues, and generate ideas rather than to achieve consensus on a preferred direction/ option.
- A facilitator needs to be invited – if possible, preferably one already known and trusted by the participants.
- As it is important to maintain energy throughout the workshop are variety of tools and visual aids should be available.
- Pre-reading sent to participants will help them to starting thinking well in advance, and therefore they will come prepared.
- Catering is important – having good coffee available to greet people is a good idea. So as not to lose too much time, provide finger food for lunch rather than arranging a sit down lunch. Provide water and mints on tables.
- Plan to have some fun along the way – make it memorable.

Implementation

- There are many different ways to facilitate a workshop – the following is a guide only and should not limit your imagination in how to make it interesting and purposeful.
- Arrange for people to introduce themselves – you can make this fun, for instance, by asking people to share something about themselves that no-one else in the room would already know about them. This helps people to connect as people rather than just 'roles'.
- Involve people early rather than having them endure lengthy presentations – it is workshop after all and participants expect to contribute something.
- A brief overview of the stage of the project, the rationale for the workshop, and the specific workshop objectives should be clarified/reinforced at the beginning of the day.
- Gain as much as you can from every participant – allowing time for individual thinking and small group work is a good to do this.
- Record group work on flip chart or with index cards.
- Try not to get bogged down in lengthy plenary sessions – invite small groups to prepare no more than a 5 minute report back and to convey the most important messages from their group.

- There are many ways to maintain energy – a combination of small group and large group work will help. If energy is sagging get people up and moving. Alternately if people are feeling overwhelmed, jaded, allow time for people to quietly think or chat informally with each other for 10 minutes or so.
- Ensure that workshop output is obvious, recognised, and celebrate in some way at the end. You want people leaving the workshop feeling like they have been heard, that they have added value, and clear about how the workshop will feed into the community participation process.

Documentation

- Sending out a report of the workshop and an expression of appreciation will build trust and good-will.
- Hansard standard is usually not required – if trust is very low you may choose to record the workshop.
- If there is so much material generated and insufficient time to analyse or synthesise consider an additional workshop, or identify several of the group to work with you as an editorial team to pull it all together prior to sending out a report of the workshop.

Hints

- Maintain energy by using a variety of methods to get the most out of your participants.
- Help participants to get to know each other as 'people'.
- Recognise the diversity of perspectives – view them as healthy for the process.
- Feed people well and have good coffee available.
- Space for people to walk around….preferably outside, can help people to regain their energy and to stretch their legs.

Debrief

- A survey of the participants concerning the process would be useful n reviewing the workshop process and outcomes.
- What improvements could be made in future?
- Did the process meet the objectives of the community participation plan?
- Did it complement other forms of community participation in relation to this issue?
- Was the promise to the community kept?

Resources

Staffing

- An independent facilitator is usually required – if not an impartial and suitably skilled staff facilitator without a 'direct' interest in the project may be used.
- A staff member assisting to record questions and collect output can help support the facilitator – who needs to focus on group dynamics.
- Staff to promote the workshop and take registrations will also be needed.

Equipment

- Flip chats/index cards or other tools to record small group outputs.

Budget

- Costs will vary depending on numbers participating, the venue selected and the standard of catering.

Space and room set up

- Set up for multiple small group efforts.

Variations

There are many tools that can be used within the workshop process. Here are just a few:

- World café
- Samoan Circle
- ORID method of conversation
- Cardstorming
- Small group work.

Notes

Notes

Criteria for comparing techniques

Some criteria that is used for comparing the effectiveness and appropriate of techniques are as follows:

- representativeness – where participants can be regarded as representing the 'community of interest' mix for this project
- information – where participants can become well informed about the issues, constraints, options and opportunities
- expertise – where experts are available and willing to share their knowledge
- scrutiny – where participants can question experts and challenge their perspective
- deliberation – where participants are able to think collectively, and weigh up options and solutions
- accessibility – where it is easy for anyone to participate
- influence – where the process is likely to help inform decisions and actions.

In the table below we will rate various techniques according to this criteria, and then reflect on the kinds of techniques we see used so often.
Ratings – 0=non-existent; 1 = low; 2 = average; 3 = solid; 4 – good; 5 = exceptional.

	Public meeting	**Survey**	**Open House**	**Advisory Committee**	**Resident Feedback Register**	**Citizen Jury**
Representativeness	1	5	2	3?	4	3
Information	2	1	3	4	3	5
Expertise	2	0	3	4	2	5
Scrutiny	2	0	3	4	1	5
Deliberation	1	1	2	3	2	5
Accessibility	3	2	4	2	3	1
Influence	Varies	0	Varies	Varies	Varies	3-5
Cost	$	$$$	$$	$	$$$	$$$$$

It is clear that no technique is good at everything. It also shows that some techniques are more expensive. Importantly, a mix of techniques is likely to provide for a more robust process – but ONLY if Core Values are applied, and objectives/Spectrum level is clear.

Taking it back to the workplace

So now what?

What insights have you gained?

Having completed this course today what are three things you would like to do differently with regard to engaging others?

1.

2.

3.

What do you anticipate to be the greatest challenges with implementation?

What support might you need and from whom to meet those challenges?

Tips for effecting cultural change

Don't preach!

Identify ways that community engagement can add value to existing goals and aspirations.

Use the language that your audience understands – for those who are into 'risk-management' refer to the risks involved in failing to engage the 'community of interest' – point to examples where poor engagement has led to frustrating results. For those concerned about cost benefit, refer to the evidence of value adding that comes from collaboration and improved coordination – and the costs usually involved with imposing change – which encounters resistance.

Instead of viewing community engagement as another thing to do, promote as simply as a way of undertaking core business effectively.

Remind people that doing community engagement well does not mean necessarily doing more of it – it DOES mean doing it more effectively and with purpose.

It is difficult to engage communities effectively unless the organisation itself engages its own staff meaningfully. Look for opportunities for people to experience effective engagement – start on the inside. Most people have understanding of what it means to 'be engaged' and to be 'disengaged'.

Remember that unless there is effective engagement of diverse stakeholders, those who are currently exerting the most influence will continue to do so. Without embracing community engagement it is likely that polarised power struggles will characterise interaction with the community, at the expense of thoughtful deliberation.

Start small – competence builds over time. Small wins help! See below!

Unconscious competence

Conscious competence

Conscious incompetence

Unconscious incompetence

Notes

Attachments

Useful resource list:

Websites

International Association of Public Participation (IAP2) Australasia www.iap2.org.au

IAP2 website: www.iap2.org (includes Training, Spectrum and Values)

LGAQ website (LGOnline): lgaq.asn.au

Department of Communities, Community Engagement Division Website: www.getinvolved.qld.gov.au

Brisbane City Council website: www.brisbane.qld.gov.au

Twyford Consulting website: www.twyford.com.au

Co-Intelligence Institute website: http://co-intelligence.org

Dr Lyn Carson's website: www.activedemocracy.net

IPlan web site, NSW Dept of Infrastructure, Planning and Natural Resources website: www.iPlan.nsw.gov.au/engagement

Citizen Science Toolbox www.coastal.crc.org.au/toolbox/index.asp

Vancouver Coastal Health (VCH) (2003) Framework for Community Engagement, at http://www.vch.ca/ce/docs/03_11_ce_framework.pdf

Western Australian Citizens and Civic Unit website: www.citizenscape.wa.gov.au

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Global Learning Services Pty Ltd, 2000, *Education and Training for Consumer Participation in Health Care*, Canberra, Consumer Focus Collaboration.

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IAP2' Public Participation Spectrum

Increasing Level of Public Impact

	Inform	Consult	Involve	Collaborate	Empower
Public participation goal	To provide the public with balanced and objective information to assist them in understanding the problem, alternatives, opportunities 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	We will keep you informed.	We will keep you informed, listen to and acknowledge concerns and aspirations, 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 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 techniques	■ Fact sheets ■ Web sites ■ Open houses	■ Public comment ■ Focus groups ■ Surveys ■ Public meetings	■ Workshops ■ Deliberative polling	■ Citizen advisory Committees ■ Consensus-building ■ Participatory decision-making	■ Citizen juries ■ Ballots ■ Delegated decision

Case Study - Building a new hospital

Background

The state government had decided to close an old hospital and build a new hospital. The site selected was larger and on the city fringe with more space available for expansion over time. The division was a tenant in the old hospital.

To help ensure community issues were considered in the design of the new hospital the senior management team of the hospital established an advisory committee. As tenants of the existing hospital, the Division was a member of the advisory committee. Other members included representatives from local government, local community agencies and the local community health centre.

The advisory group meetings were held monthly for more than a year. There were frequent discussions in these meetings about the new hospital's "user group" who senior management was consulting on what seemed to be a regular basis. Members of the advisory committee understood that the user group was a local residents and community agencies group who would raise issues about service delivery from the new hospital to the local community. Items reportedly discussed included layout and facilities on the site, opening celebrations, public information days etc.

The current situation

After 12 months of consultation with the advisory group the plans for the new hospital were revealed at a public meeting. At the meeting it was revealed that the user group had actually comprised local medical specialists who would have admitting rights to the hospital and access to rooms for outpatient services. There had been little or no input from people who were likely to use the new hospital.

The plans revealed that:

- The hospital was to be located adjacent to a large new shopping centre. An enormous grassy paddock separated the shopping centre car park from the hospital. No footpath was available between the shopping centre and the hospital, either through the paddock or on the road which was sealed but had no guttering or footpaths and had a steep shoulder on either side. Public buses stopped in the shopping centre. The local railway station was several minutes walk away from the shopping centre and hospital. Physical access to the hospital was likely to be very challenging for anyone without a car. Some residents would be forced to take a taxi from the shopping centre bus stop to the hospital.

- The hospital was to have two entrances for the public: the main entrance and the entrance to the outpatient clinics. Plans included a sign over the outpatient clinics that could be clearly seen from the outer edge of the car park. The sign was to read "AMBULATORY CARE". One member of the public pointed out that most people did not know what this meant and would assume it had something to do with ambulances. The majority of people would therefore be likely to use the main entrance, meaning outpatients would have to be continually redirected to go outside the building to the other entrance.

- The new hospital was to be located next to a former municipal tip site. Although the tip was no longer in operation the land had not been redeveloped. Consequently there were usually large flocks of birds to be found scavenging on the site. A retired engineer at the meeting pointed to numerous similar cases where large air conditioning units had to be repeatedly shut down because birds had been sucked into the air intakes.

What next

Hospital management recognise that they need to rethink the consultation process, and have approached your team to provide assistance in taking the project forward. You need to develop a consultation plan.

Stakeholders

Hospital management and the design team, members of the user group and the advisory committee, potential patients and users of services, the shopping centre, transport providers, councillors and council officers.

Issues

Construction time table and budget, needs of medical specialists and other tenants, access, communication with all user groups, health and safety, reliability of air-conditioning and other services, equity, future growth potential, funding of footpaths etc.

Case Study - Divisions as partners in the community engagement process

Nimbin a small rural community in Northern NSW, like many communities across Australia suffered a crisis – their local Doctor had decided to leave due to burn out. The pressures of operating as a solo GP and the overwhelming demand for GP services had finally been the deciding point for the departure of the local GP. The Nimbin community responded by organising a community forum to look at the outcomes of loosing their GP and the possibility of loosing the local hospital and all medical services as a result of having no GP. Key stakeholders including, the local Area Health Service, the Northern Rivers Division of General Practice, various politicians and local government representatives were all invited to attend as an expert panel at the community forum.

As a result of this process, information was shared and a collaborative model of approach was adopted to address the situation. Through information pooling, the local community were informed that one of the main barriers of obtaining funding was a boundary issue. Nimbin's postcode was the same as Lismore and therefore not eligible for separate funding in its own right. An outcome of this process was the formation of the action group 'Nimbin Needs Doctors'. This group, established by community representatives, lobbied various agencies to maintain medical services for Nimbin.

The local Division - Northern Rivers Division of General Practice worked closely with this group. As a result of the collaboration process a number of capacity building outcomes were implemented. These included:

- The development of the Northern Rivers Rural General Practice (NRDGP) Entity. A Collaborative partnership between Nrth Rivers DGP, Area Health Service, Ballina Shire Council and Lismore City Council. The aim of the Entity was to establish mutli-purpose coordinated outposts that incorporated the ability to provide general practitioner services. Separate MOUs were established with each key stakeholder clearly identifying responsibilities and support from each sector.
- A key outcome of the community lobbying was a change in boundary recognition that Nimbin wasn't part of Lismore, allowing separate funding to be applied for and granted through the allocation of a GP Employment Entity grant. Medicare rebates equivalent to a VR doctor were also granted.
- The establishment of a General Practice Medical Centre in Nimbin. The local Division acts as the auspicing body and provides the ongoing management of the medical service.
- An advisory committee was established, with key stakeholders participating allowing ongoing collaboration and involvement.

- Nimbin now has as an active ongoing consumer representation group – 'Nimbin Still Needs Doctors Rural Action Group'. This group is invited to each advisory committee meeting and provides a valuable community feedback and lobbying role.
- Currently, the Nimbin Clinic has 4 GPs working at the centre, the hospital is now a purpose built MPS (a lot better than the hospital run out of a old residential building) and the community is now being used as a showcase for other areas going through similar issues.

Lessons from this example

The process of collaboration and in particular information sharing proved a valuable process in this situation. In this case study, community involvement and sharing of information has been extremely important, ensuring a positive outcome for all.

Notes