



Community engagement toolkit for planning

December 2017



Queensland
Government

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An electronic copy of this report is available on the Planning group's website at <https://planning.dilgp.qld.gov.au>.

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Preface

Planning creates great places for people to live, work and play. Because of this, local communities benefit the most from good planning.

Queensland's planning system encourages effective and genuine community engagement so that local communities can participate in the planning process. It does this while supporting efficient and consistent decision-making that instils investment and community confidence.

To encourage genuine community engagement in the planning process, this toolkit has been developed to help Queensland councils engage with their communities about planning in a meaningful and open manner. It will be kept up to date by the department, helping all councils to access feedback on the benefits of engagement tools, as well as current trends in engagement techniques.

We appreciate that many local governments in Queensland have already developed, or are currently developing, community engagement toolkits. Our goal is to work with these existing toolkits by providing, and capturing, specific advice about engagement processes and tools that encourage people to get involved in planning decisions that affect their local community.

The toolkit has been developed with advice from community engagement specialists and their peak representative body – the International Association of Public Participation (IAP2). IAP2 has endorsed this toolkit.

The toolkit features easily accessible web-based tools.

About the toolkit

The Queensland Government is responsible for administering the legislation underpinning the state's planning and development system. A new era has arrived with the commencement of the *Planning Act 2016* and associated new statutory instruments. These form the framework for a better planning system that enables responsible development and delivers prosperity, sustainability and liveability now and into the future.

The government is responsible for ensuring that communities can be involved in the decisions about planning and development that affect them. These decisions relate to planning schemes, other 'local planning instruments'¹ and some development decisions where the proposal has been publicly notified.

The state's role is to:

- establish overall principles, governance and standards
- balance and manage the expectations of all stakeholders
- provide guidance on how to address the principles and meet the standards, while also meeting community and stakeholder expectations.

What is the toolkit?

This toolkit supports the delivery of effective community engagement in plan-making throughout Queensland.

It aims to help local governments to develop community engagement strategies for:

- preparing new local planning instruments
- amending existing local planning instruments.

Accordingly, the toolkit is intended to support local governments prepare a communications strategy under the Minister's Guidelines and Rules (MGR) for plan-making.

The toolkit is a non-statutory set of practical tools and information intended to support local governments meet their requirements to engage with the community, as outlined in the MGR. It is also intended to support community members and stakeholders in their interactions with the plan-making process.

This toolkit provides a central location for information about current trends in engagement techniques, the benefits of particular tools when engaging with the community about planning, and case studies. It does not specifically address community engagement related to the development assessment process – only those development proposals that are publicly notified provide an opportunity for the community to have a say. Local governments may still use the tools within the toolkit during the notification timeframe, but there is not the opportunity to go beyond the statutory time requirements.

¹ According to the *Planning Act 2016*:

A local planning instrument is a planning instrument made by a local government, and is either:

(a) a planning scheme; or
 (b) a TLPI [temporary local planning instrument]; or
 (c) a planning scheme policy.

The web-based nature of this toolkit provides the capacity for information to be provided in PDF and other formats, where possible.

Overall, this toolkit aims to foster a new approach to, and enthusiasm for, community engagement for the benefit of local communities across Queensland. Over time, it will be recognised as the main repository for leading-practice community engagement in Queensland for the planning system.

Vision statement

Communities in Queensland affected by plan-making processes are able to participate in meaningful, appropriate and timely community engagement that provides for their views to be considered in a way commensurate with the scope of the proposed plan or plan-amendment decision.

Outcomes sought

The community is engaged in plan-making in a relevant and appropriate way through:

- engagement that focuses on the best interests of the community
- engagement that is open, honest and meaningful
- engagement approaches that are inclusive and meet their particular needs
- timely, accurate, easy-to-understand and accessible information
- transparent decision-making.

The toolkit is not a statutory instrument.

Why is a toolkit needed?

Local communities throughout Queensland are diverse. While local governments, the development industry and other stakeholders strive to ensure they meet best-practice standards for engagement, the capacity to research ‘best-practice engagement’ and to conduct community engagement varies widely.

The department believes that:

Queensland’s planning system should support effective and genuine public participation in planning, whilst providing for efficient and consistent decision-making that instils investment and community confidence.²

How the toolkit relates to statutory requirements

Land-use planning is undertaken for a range of reasons including:

- managing the impacts of growing and diverse populations
- managing the effects of natural hazards and climate change
- protecting important resources such as open space, areas of environmental significance and productive agricultural land.

Planning enables appropriate development in appropriate locations and creates great places for people to live, work and play. Because of this, local communities are the key beneficiaries of good planning. It is important to ensure that Queensland’s planning system includes opportunities for genuine and effective community engagement, and these opportunities need to be secured in the state’s planning legislation.

² DILGP, 2015, p. 2.

The MGR shows key points in the process where community engagement needs to be carried out by local governments for a specified minimum period. These rules also require, in some cases, that local governments prepare a communications strategy for the new planning scheme or amendment to the scheme. (See figure 1 below and table 1 on the following page.)

While it is mandatory under the MGR for local governments to develop a communications strategy, the use of any tools and resources in this toolkit is entirely up to each local government's discretion. This toolkit provides a suite of options for local governments to mix and match according to their circumstances. The state has a role in confirming, or suggesting changes to, the communications strategy.

The toolkit itself is non-statutory. It provides ideas, options and tools to inform possible approaches to community engagement.

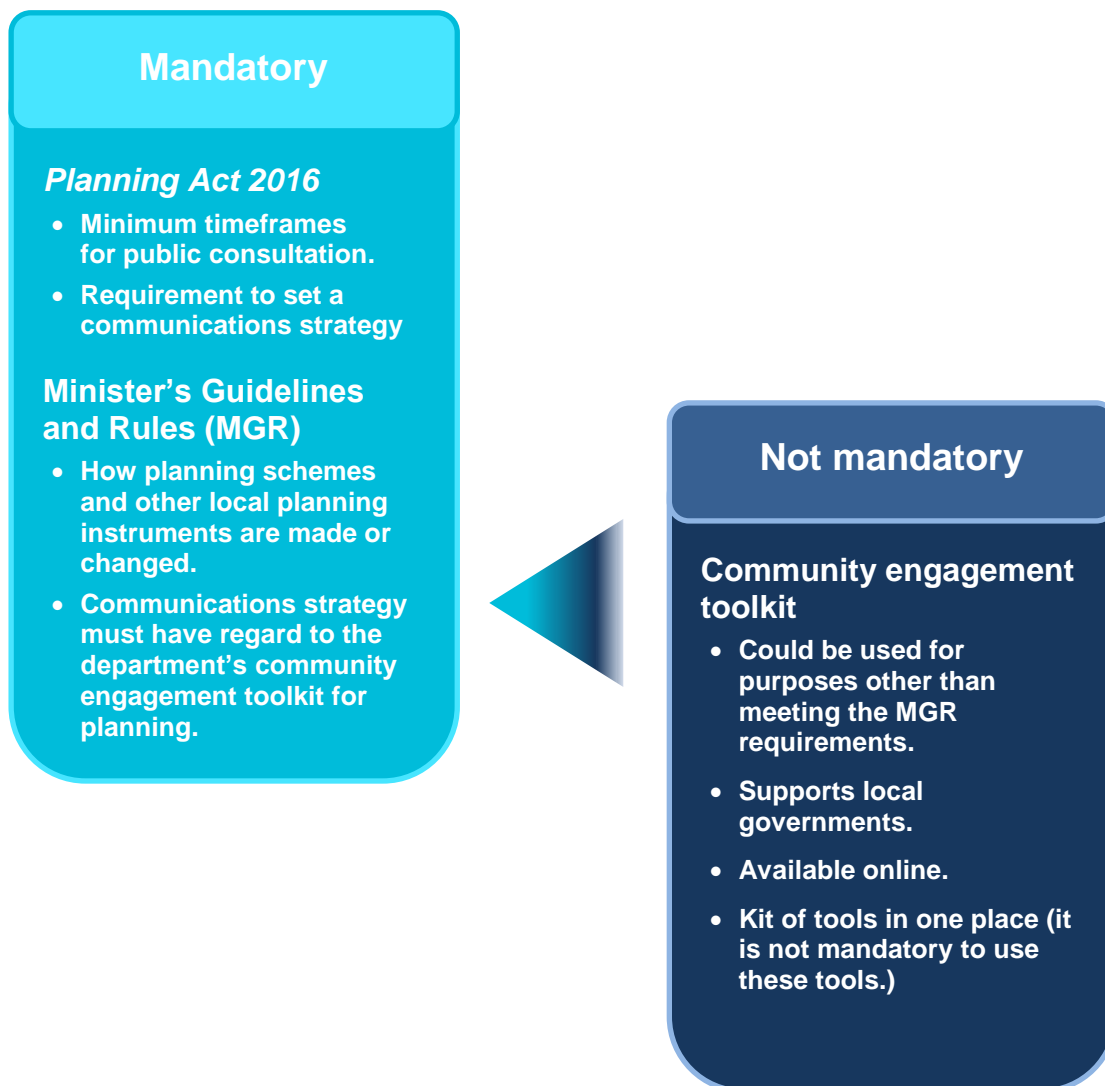


Figure 1: Relationship with Minister's Guidelines and Rules

Table 1: For a communications strategy under chapter 2 of the MGR

Aspect	Community engagement toolkit support
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A plan for public consultation complies with any prescribed consultation period requirements under the Planning Act or the relevant section of the MGR 	N/A
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A statement about the extent of consultation with relevant state agencies 	Part 2 – Developing a community engagement plan, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Tool 2.3 – Listing negotiable and non-negotiable items Tool 2.4 – Stakeholder understanding Tool 2.6 – Checklist for identifying stakeholder needs Tool 2.7 – Stakeholder prioritisation table
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A description of how the attention of the community, or the affected part of the community, will be drawn to the purpose and general effect of the instrument 	Part 2 - Developing a community engagement plan, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Tool 2.2A – Aligning community engagement to stakeholder impacts Tool 2.2B – Decision-making flowchart to help align community engagement to stakeholder impact levels Tool 2.4 – Stakeholder understanding Tool 2.6 – Checklist for identifying stakeholder needs Part 3 – Selecting community engagement tools: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Tool 3.1 – Selecting engagement tools to achieve engagement critical success factors Tool 3.2 – Choosing the right engagement tools – options matrix Part 4 – Engaging with specific groups (and the range of checklists and resources in this part)
For any communications strategy to give consideration to:	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The proposed geographical community or communities of interest to be consulted 	Part 1 – Guiding principles: What do we mean by 'community'?
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The relevant community groups, organisations and stakeholders 	Part 2 – Developing a community engagement plan, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Tool 2.4 – Stakeholder understanding Tool 2.6 – Checklist for identifying stakeholder needs Part 4 – Engaging with specific groups (and the range of checklists and resources in this part).
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> How the proposed planning scheme or amendment is relevant to the community 	Part 2 – Developing a community engagement plan, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Tool 2.2A – Aligning community engagement to stakeholder impacts Tool 2.2B – Decision-making flowchart to help align community engagement to stakeholder impact levels
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The proposed length of consultation 	N/A
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The proposed methods of consultation – tools and activities 	Part 3 – Selecting community engagement tools, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Tool 3.1 – Selecting engagement tools to achieve critical success factors Tool 3.2 – Choosing the right engagement tools

	Part 5 – Content development, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tool 5.1 – Ten tips for creating engagement content • Tool 5.2 – Examples of questions to guide engagement material content
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Any actions that are optional or contingent on other actions occurring in the process 	Part 2 – Developing a community engagement plan Define the community engagement scope
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The timing of the process, including any milestones 	N/A
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Any supporting evidence for the proposed communication strategy 	N/A

Part 1: Guiding principles

What is community engagement?

Different terms are used to describe the concept of community engagement, including public participation and community consultation. In Australia, the term community engagement tends to be used more than public participation, with consultation now considered to be a point on the engagement (or participation) spectrum.

Community engagement, or public participation, has a range of definitions. However, typically it refers to the process of involving people in the decisions that affect them. Engagement is considered to be 'the process by which government, organisations, communities and individuals connect in the development and implementation of decisions that affect them'.³

What do we mean by 'community'?

Communities of place: Where people identify with a defined geographical area, e.g. a council ward, a housing development or a neighbourhood.

Communities of interest: Where people share a particular experience, interest or characteristic such as young people, faith groups, older people, people with disability, migrant groups, community or sporting groups.⁴

Why is community engagement important?

Governments and industry across the globe are increasingly recognising the value of community and stakeholder engagement as an essential part of project planning and decision-making.⁵

Community engagement, in general, enables better outcomes for both the community and government. It allows the parties involved to identify the concerns, risks, opportunities, options and potential solutions that surround an issue, leading to more informed decision-making and mutual benefits that include:

- better policy development and service delivery
- a better understanding of the day-to-day experience of people in communities
- better relationships between the community and the government
- community awareness and understanding about an issue
- community buy-in and higher levels of community ownership
- greater community support for, and more effective, policy implementation
- determining what will work in reality and what will not
- a mechanism for feedback/evaluation on existing policies
- improved communication pathways, such as the use and further development of community networks
- opportunity to develop individual and community capacity and shared understanding of both issues and potential solutions
- legitimisation of decisions around controversial issues

³ Consult Australia, 2015.

⁴ City of Tea Tree Gully, 2014

⁵ IAP2.

- mutual learning
- reduced conflict within stakeholder groups because individuals and communities can hear and understand each other's points of view, leading to consensus
- uncovering new ideas and expertise.

In the context of planning, the benefits of community engagement include:

- better policy decisions when developing local planning instruments
- a better understanding of the day-to-day experience of people in their communities, and their appreciation of their local amenity and heritage
- better relationships between the community and local government
- community awareness and understanding about the impacts of population growth, natural hazards and climate change, and the need to protect important resources such as open space, areas of environmental significance and productive agricultural land
- community buy-in and higher levels of community ownership of planning instruments
- a mechanism for feedback and evaluation of planning decisions
- improved communication between local government and community members
- opportunity to develop individual and community capacity and shared understanding of potential planning approaches
- reduced conflict within stakeholder groups, as individuals and communities can hear and understand each other's points of view, leading to consensus
- uncovering new ideas and expertise.

Communities value the opportunity to meet and discuss issues with each other and with government to develop innovative solutions, share their experiences, expand their understanding around issues and develop empathy with competing stakeholders. Creating policy solutions through the engagement process involves compromises and trade-offs that balance community interest as a whole and enable budget priorities to be set:⁶

... governments cannot help to solve complex problems without the concerted efforts of the general public. Arriving at solutions will invariably involve trade-offs and outcomes that reflect and/or balance community interest as a whole and enable budget priorities to be set.

For this reason, governments must engage more broadly with the community and in ways that are different from what has been tried before.

Accessibility, timing and transparency are all important elements in getting community engagement right. For complex and controversial issues, undertaking community engagement earlier rather than later in the life of a policy or project may have major benefits. It gives the community the opportunity to learn about the trade-offs involved, and a diverse range of community views can be considered in the development of options or solutions.

In the past, it has been difficult to quantify the benefit of community engagement to projects. In 2015, Consult Australia, with the support of IAP2, prepared *Valuing better engagement: An economic framework to quantify the value of stakeholder engagement for infrastructure delivery*. Although this document focuses on infrastructure projects, community engagement professionals may find it useful within the planning framework.

⁶ Tasmanian Government Framework for Community Engagement, 2013.

Six core principles

The six core principles of community engagement of particular use in the planning framework are defined below.

Resource 1.1: Six core principles

Community is engaged in a relevant and appropriate way

Principles	How this may be applied at the local level
1. Engagement focuses on the best interests of the community	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Engagement is undertaken in the best interests of the whole community (or the affected part of the community, if the changes apply only to part of the local government area), rather than of any individual person or group.
2. Engagement is open, honest and meaningful	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Engagement draws the attention of the community to all relevant information, the purpose and general effect of the proposed plan/changes and the specific details. The community is provided with genuine opportunities to participate in/contribute to the plan-making process and is kept informed of the proposed plan/changes and its implications and any amendments during the process.
3. Approaches to engagement are inclusive and appropriate	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Engagement is inclusive, appropriate to the needs of the community, and commensurate with the scale and complexity of the proposed plan/changes. Reach out to and encourage the community to be involved in discussing planning and development issues that affect their lives, making sure to seek out diverse voices and perspectives. Identify and address potential barriers to community input, while being open with the community about any budget constraints. Consistent engagement processes can make it easier for the community and stakeholders to participate. However, this must be balanced with the need for engagement tools to suit the community and the circumstances of the proposal being considered. Identify approaches to reach all community members, including those with specific needs (e.g. language, people with disabilities, older people, and the young). Different engagement tools and different questions will produce better responses with different communities. Where possible, use a mix of qualitative and quantitative engagement methods to gather a diversity of opinions.
4. Information is timely and relevant	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The community is provided with information in a timely manner which allows for input before decisions are made. Sufficient time is allowed for the community to consider information and then make a meaningful contribution to the plan-making or development assessment process. Engagement should start early in the plan-making or development process when objectives and options are being identified. Listening to the community, addressing their concerns, and building capacity to understand planning and development issues and solutions can mean longer periods of engagement. Recognise that public engagement is a dynamic, ongoing process that requires flexibility.

5. Information is accurate, easy to understand and accessible	<p>The community has easy access to information that is:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • accurate, easy to read and easy to understand • tailored to the community, where necessary, in language and style • in a form that appeals to the intended audience • clear about how to make a submission, how the submission will be dealt with, and the general timeframe before a decision can be expected.
6. Decision-making is transparent	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The final decision about the proposed plan, changes to the plan or the development proposal is made in an open and transparent way. • The community, as a whole, and individual submitters are provided with reasons for the decision and information about how all submissions have been taken into account.

International Association for Public Participation

The International Association for Public Participation (IAP2) Federation and Australasian chapter offers concepts, principles and current industry practice in relation to community engagement. IAP2 defines community engagement as:

Any process that involves the community in problem-solving or decision-making and uses community input to make better decisions.

IAP2 has developed seven core values for the practice of public participation:

...for use in developing and implementing public participation processes to help inform better decisions that reflect the interests and concerns of potentially affected people and entities’.

These core values are:

1. Public participation is based on the belief that those who are affected by a decision have a right to be involved in the decision-making process.
2. Public participation includes the promise that the public’s contribution will influence the decision.
3. Public participation promotes sustainable decisions by recognising and communicating the needs and interests of all participants, including decision makers.
4. Public participation seeks out and facilitates the involvement of those potentially affected by or interested in a decision.
5. Public participation seeks input from participants in designing how they participate.
6. Public participation provides participants with the information they need to participate in a meaningful way.
7. Public participation communicates to participants how their input affected the decision.

In addition, the IAP2 Quality Assurance Standard for Community and Stakeholder Engagement outlines steps for implementing quality engagement. It includes a process that audits an engagement process against the IAP2 core values.

IAP2 developed a spectrum of public participation that helps define the community’s role in any community engagement process. The IAP2 Spectrum (2014) shows that differing levels of participation are appropriate, depending on the outcomes, timeframes, resources and levels of concern or interest in the decision to be made. Most importantly, the spectrum sets out the promise being made to the public at each participation level.


The IAP2 Spectrum is referenced in some form, or underpins, many local and state government community engagement toolkits available in Australia.

Resource 1.2: IAP2's public participation spectrum



IAP2'S PUBLIC PARTICIPATION SPECTRUM

The IAP2 Federation has developed the Spectrum to help groups define the public's role in any public participation process. The IAP2 Spectrum is quickly becoming an international standard.

INCREASING IMPACT ON THE DECISION 					
PUBLIC PARTICIPATION GOAL	INFORM	CONSULT	INVOLVE	COLLABORATE	EMPOWER
	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 concerns and aspirations, and provide feedback on how public input influenced the decision. We will seek your feedback on drafts and proposals.	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 work together with you to formulate solutions and incorporate your advice and recommendations into the decisions to the maximum extent possible.	We will implement what you decide.

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In 2014, IAP2 Australasia developed a community engagement model that identified seven key drivers of contemporary engagement. These are:

1. community connectedness
2. greater access to information
3. increased visibility
4. pressure to deliver value for money
5. the nature of complex problems
6. commercial pressure to innovate
7. mobility and pace of communication.

This contemporary engagement model recognises that engagement activities may be led by the organisation, the community or both. It also recognises that the action may be driven by the community, the organisation or both.

In the context of the planning system, the prevalent model would be where a local government or a developer both leads the process and takes action. There may also be some current examples of where local governments and their communities have shared leadership and action. In the future, it is likely that there will be more examples of planning projects where the community advocates for change and local government acts accordingly.



Figure 2: Community-engagement models

Source: IAP2 Australasia. IAP2 Australasia Contemporary Engagement Model

Part 2: Developing a community engagement plan

A community engagement plan should outline a clear approach to how the community and stakeholders will be engaged on planning and development matters. To respond to the circumstances of a particular local government or a particular community, engagement plans can take many different forms. However, they should, at least, address the matters listed in the following checklist.

Tool 2.1: Checklist for developing an engagement plan

☐ **Engagement purpose:** Have you clearly defined the purpose of the engagement?

This involves explaining the reason input or participation is necessary, i.e. what planning problem is the community helping to resolve or what decision does local government need to make? This process also involves defining the stakeholders affected and the decision-makers.

☐ **Engagement scope:** Have you clearly defined the scope of the engagement project?

This involves explaining the decisions that need to be made, what the engagement process will focus on, and what you are seeking input on. This process also involves defining what is non-negotiable (i.e. what the community cannot influence) and what is negotiable (i.e. what the community can influence). At this point you could also reach out to internal engagement staff to confirm your approach, and determine if external engagement resources are required.

☐ **Engagement objectives:** Have you clearly defined the objectives that the engagement process will achieve?

This involves explaining the objectives of your engagement process. Engagement objectives could relate to a range of potential outcomes, including:

- ☐ building community capacity to understand planning and development issues
- ☐ building stronger relationships with community and stakeholders
- ☐ seeking innovative solutions for planning and development challenges
- ☐ making better decisions about planning and development.

☐ **Context analysis:** Have you conducted analysis to understand the local, regional, state and national context that will affect the engagement process?

This could involve exploring local demographic and economic characteristics, access to technology, level of understanding of planning issues, response to previous engagement processes.

☐ **Stakeholder and issues analysis:** Have you conducted analysis of the different stakeholders and community groups that could be interested in your process?

This analysis could include identifying stakeholders and community groups, exploring what issues are of interest to them and how these individuals and groups might be affected, and what methods you will use to engage and build relationships with them.

☐ **Level of engagement:** Have you determined the role of the community in the decision-making process?

This process involves determining whether you will be promising to inform, consult, involve, collaborate or empower the community. This could also include identifying the phases of a project or process where the particular levels of engagement will apply.

☐ **Engagement phases:** Have you described the project phases and timeframes?

This involves describing the phases of your project, and the associated timeframes, and

how the engagement process supports these phases and complements the overall delivery of the project.

- ☐ **Data collection and analysis:** Have you determined what data are required to support the decision?

This process involves identifying how community input will be collected and in what format, and how it will be used to inform the decision.

- ☐ **Engagement methods:** Have you defined a list of methods or tools you will use to inform community members, and gain community input, feedback or collaboration to achieve your engagement objectives?

This will include communication methods to raise awareness or understanding about the planning or development project, and how feedback will be provided to the community about the engagement process, what has been heard and how it will be considered.

- ☐ **Resources:** Determine what financial and human resources are needed, or are available, to deliver the defined engagement methods.

- ☐ **Implementation plan:** Define a schedule for how and when the engagement will occur, which should be linked to the engagement phases of the project.

- ☐ **Feedback:** Identify how feedback will be provided to community members and stakeholders so that they understand how their input shaped the project or process outcome.

- ☐ **Evaluation measures:** Define what you will do to evaluate the success of your engagement. This could include ways to measure how satisfied the community and the project team are with the engagement process, the quality of the input received, and how well the engagement program achieved your stated objectives.

Define the community engagement scope

As a first step, you will need to scope the engagement project and determine what level of community engagement is appropriate. This step will help to clarify why you are engaging with the community (i.e. the purpose) and to identify community engagement objectives relevant to your project. This step addresses the first three items on the checklist.

Community engagement objectives describe what needs to be achieved with your stakeholders in the delivery of your engagement project. Some of the objectives will be about actions or activities and some will be about the relationships with stakeholders.

The work by the Social Planning and Research Council of British Columbia to develop four levels of impact and associated criteria can help you assess the likely level of impact that the planning or development project may have on the community and stakeholders. Applying this to the IAP2 Public Participation Spectrum provides further guidance in understanding the relationship between the level of community impact and the level of engagement that should be applied.

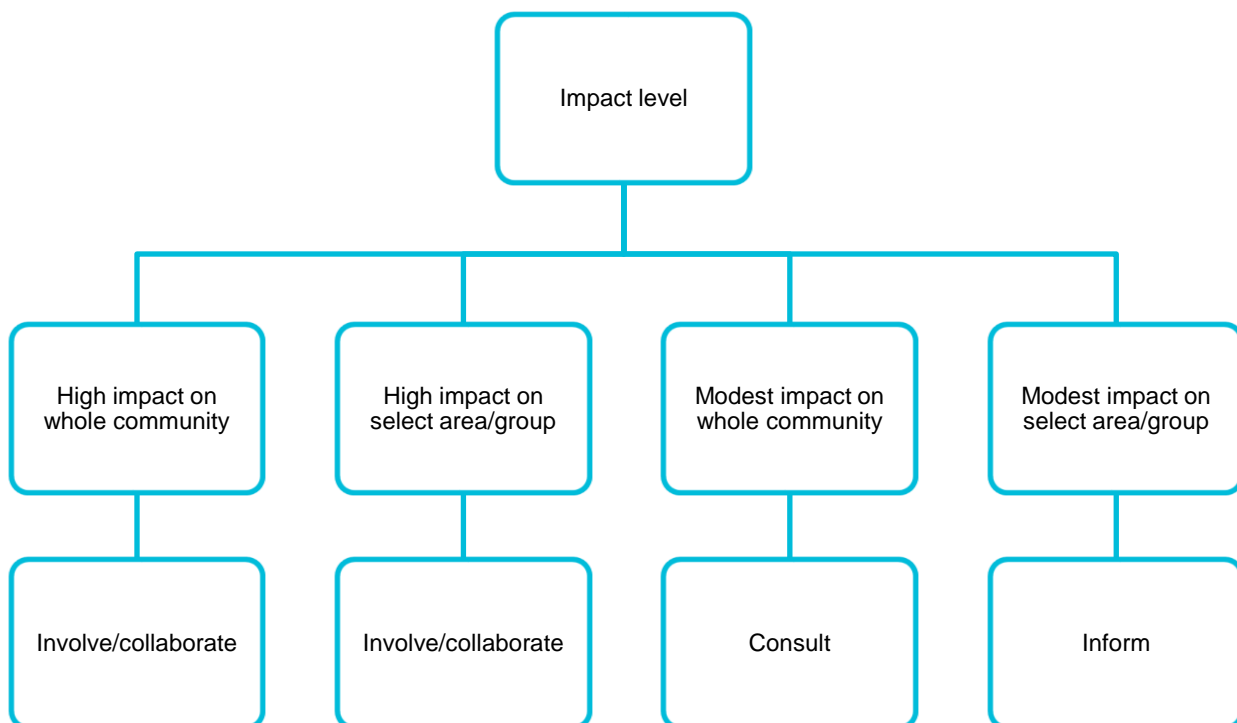
Tool 2.2A: Aligning community engagement to stakeholder impact levels

Likely level of impact	Criteria	Examples	Level of community engagement
High impact on whole community	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> High impact across community including to the natural environment or general health and safety of all residents. High degree of interest across the community. Strong possibility of conflicting perspectives. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> New planning scheme for the whole local government area. 	Involve/collaborate
High impact on a select area and/or community group	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> High impact on a specific neighbourhood, group in the community or specific service or program. Strong possibility of conflicting perspectives at the neighbourhood level or the need for trade-offs among certain groups. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Changes in zoning to restrict future development rights. Increases in density in key locations. New or amendments to existing, neighbourhood or local plan. 	
Modest impact on whole community	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Modest impact across the community. Sufficient degree of interest to warrant community engagement. Moderate possibility for conflicting perspectives. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Updating planning scheme provisions relating to small-lot housing or apartment building design. The inclusion of a new flood overlay. 	Consult
Modest impact on select area and/or community group	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Modest impact on a neighbourhood area, community group(s) or specific facility/service. Small change to a localised facility/service. Modest risk of controversy or conflict at the local level. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Changes to hours of operation of a community facility. Intersection redesign. 	Inform

Tool 2.2B: Decision-making flowchart to help align community engagement to stakeholder impact levels

This tool can be used in conjunction with 2.2A to help you align impact levels with level of community engagement. Once you have identified a level of community engagement you can refer to Resource 1.2: IAP2's public participation spectrum to determine associated goal and promise to the community.

For planning projects, some decisions may be non-negotiable, while others may be negotiable. Defining what is negotiable and what is not will determine how you engage with your community and stakeholders. It is important to understand what these negotiables and non-negotiables are at the start of a project or process in order to manage community and stakeholder expectations about their level of influence on project or process outcomes.



Tool 2.3: Listing negotiable and non-negotiable items

Please note that this tool only lists some examples for illustration purposes. You will need to add to the table your project's circumstances.

Non-negotiable	Negotiable
<p>Non-negotiable items are the elements of a planning process or project that cannot change. Some examples are listed below. Each project is different. It pays to consider this question up-front on every project:</p> <p>What aspect of this project cannot change? What is fixed?</p>	<p>Negotiable items are those that are not bound by legislative or statutory requirements. Some examples are listed below. Each project is different. It pays to consider this question up-front on every project:</p> <p>What aspects of this project can be influenced by the community and stakeholders?</p>
For example, legislative requirements for engagement that needs to be followed.	For example, the range of engagement techniques that can be implemented to add value to the statutory process.
For example, the amount of budget local government has allocated to spend on the engagement process.	For example, the opportunity to work with the community to implement community-led and community-funded engagement activities.
For example, community safety such as the need to restrict development in flood-prone areas.	For example, the opportunity to influence how density is addressed in a local government area.
For example, the need to protect certain flora and fauna communities because they are listed as 'rare and threatened'.	For example, the opportunity to influence where parkland is located, or its function, in a local government area.

Determine the context

An important step when planning any community engagement is to familiarise yourself with any existing plans or reports related to your planning project, your stakeholders and community members, or the local area. Whether recent or historical, they will offer valuable insights into community and stakeholder sentiments, key issues and areas of interest that may be relevant to your planning project. Some examples are:

- demographic and economic information, including population projections or analysis of community characteristics (e.g. age, ethnicity, socio-economic indicators)
- reports about environmental constraints affecting the area (e.g. flooding, vegetation and landslip)
- reports about local character and streetscape
- traffic information, and future and historic infrastructure plans
- previous community engagement outcomes for similar projects, locations or demographics.

Understand your stakeholders, their interests and levels of influence

Not all stakeholders in a particular group or sub-group will necessarily share the same concerns or have unified opinions or priorities. This step explores how to understand and identify stakeholders who should be involved in the engagement process.

Identification of key stakeholders is vital to engaging with people in the community who can contribute, or can influence and encourage others to contribute.

Satisfaction with local government is not confined to roads, rates, safety and rubbish. Sometimes improvements in these areas may not measurably improve overall community satisfaction. If a local government wants to improve community perceptions, it is critical that they seek to understand what makes its residents 'tick'.⁷

Every stakeholder or community group has their own reason to participate in an engagement process. An understanding of these motives is good to keep in mind, e.g. young people may want to show their capabilities and older people may want to share their expertise.⁸

Three key steps can be taken to better understand your stakeholders.

⁷ Bang the Table: <http://bangthetable.com/2011/07/02/all-lgas-are-unique-arent-they/>

⁸ Citizenlab: http://citizenlab.co/blog/civic-engagement/3-key-learnings-to-move-forward-with-citizen-engagement-co-creation/?utm_source=CitizenLab+Newsletter&utm_campaign=d0047db73a-CitizenLab_s_Weekly5&utm_medium=email&utm_term=0_459e3f49da-d0047db73a-142562401

Tool 2.4: Stakeholder understanding checklist

Step 1: Identify stakeholders

- ☐ Have you considered who the stakeholders are? Have you identified the individuals and groups that will be affected by the outcomes of the planning process? Have you identified the individuals or groups that may be able to influence the outcomes of a planning process?
- ☐ A stakeholder is someone who can affect the success of the planning project or who will be affected by the project.
- ☐ Larger projects are likely to have a larger number of stakeholders involved. However, do not underestimate the number of people that could become interested or involved in smaller projects.
- ☐ Your list of stakeholders should be as exhaustive as possible. This is the time to make sure that you understand the local and regional contexts of your project, the people who help to shape those contexts, and what planning issues interest them.
- ☐ Do you understand the demographic characteristics of your community, and any socio-economic indicators? Do you know whether the community understands planning issues? How have they responded to previous engagement processes?
- ☐ For each stakeholder, it is important to understand how they might be affected, what their level of interest is likely to be, and what their level of interest should be (particularly where the planning outcomes may create long-term changes that are not easily understood impacts, e.g. changes in density in a residential area).

Step 2: Analyse stakeholder influence and impact

Once you have identified the stakeholders, and captured information about their influence, interest and levels of understanding about planning issues, you can start to analyse this information.

- ☐ How much constructive or negative influence could a stakeholder have on the outcomes of the planning process? How much interest are they likely to have?

This step involves analysing each of your identified stakeholders against certain criteria.

The two key criteria to analyse stakeholders against are:

- 1) extent to which they are interested (low to high)
- 2) ability to influence outcomes (low to high).

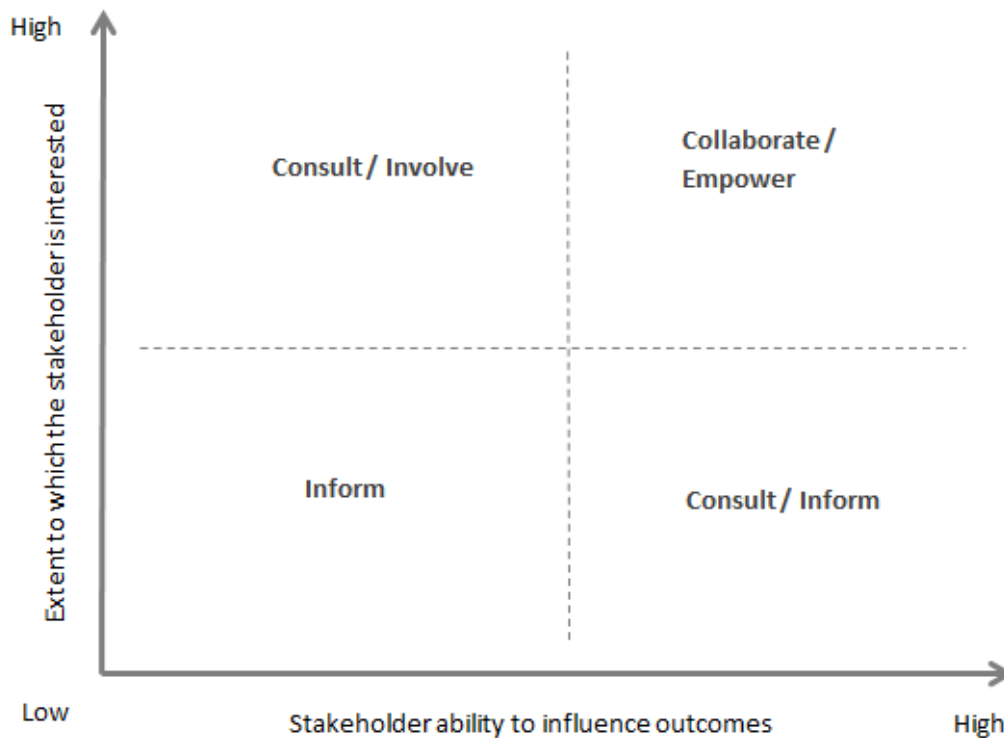
Once this analysis is complete, you will be able to create a prioritised list of stakeholders and an associated engagement strategy.

Step 3: Prioritise stakeholders

- ☐ Have you completed your analysis of stakeholder interest and influence? If so, you can now prioritise your key stakeholder list.
- ☐ Does your stakeholder have a low level of interest and low level of influence? Then they may be a lower priority for your engagement strategy.
- ☐ Should the stakeholder be more interested than they are? If this is the case, consider treating them as if their interest is high, so that you can raise awareness and generate their interest.
- ☐ Does your stakeholder have a high level of interest and high influence? Then they will have a higher priority in your engagement strategy.

This exercise should be conducted for all your identified stakeholders, so that your engagement strategy can comprehensively address all stakeholder interests.

Resource 2.1: Stakeholder ability to influence outcomes



It is important to note that this toolkit does not focus on the 'empower' end of the IAP2 Spectrum. The goal of processes that empower is to place decision-making in the hands of the community. With the purpose of the toolkit in mind, this would mean that local governments would commit to implementing what the community decided in relation to planning processes, rather than make that decision themselves. However, in practice, during the plan-making or amendment process, it is necessary for local governments to weigh up a range of factors such as environment, economy, employment, transport and housing. Many of these factors have legislative requirements that need to be complied with.

Tool 2.5: Checklist for identifying stakeholder needs

This tool will help you to identify the different needs of stakeholders, as they become involved in your engagement process.

- ☐ What level of information do stakeholders need to make an informed decision about the planning project? Do they already understand planning concepts? Do they need support to build their understanding of planning concepts?
- ☐ What level of information are stakeholders likely to seek about your project?
- ☐ Will all stakeholder contributions influence the project equally? Or are there some individuals or groups that will have more influence on the outcomes of the project? Remember that it is important to be transparent.
- ☐ Is a community leader available to assist with the community engagement process? Will this community leader be able to make introductions? Will the assistance of this community leader build the credibility of the project or the project team?
- ☐ Will everyone interested in, or potentially affected by, the project have an opportunity to become involved?
- ☐ Have efforts been made to include under-represented community groups in all community engagement processes (e.g. younger people, older people, people with disabilities, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, people from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds, and disadvantaged and homeless people)?
- ☐ Are there any barriers that may prevent some stakeholders from participating in the process? These barriers could be physical, economic, cultural, or linguistic.

Tool 2.6: Stakeholder prioritisation table

Stakeholder name	Contact person	Impact (L, M, H)	Influence (L, M, H)	What is important to the stakeholder	How might the stakeholder contribute to the project?	How might the stakeholder oppose the project?	Strategy for engaging the stakeholder
What is the name of the stakeholder group or individual?	Who is the nominated contact person?	Will the impact of the project on the stakeholder be low, medium or high? Tools 2.2A, 2.2B, 2.4 and 2.6 will help you to understand the impact.	Will the potential influence of the stakeholder on the project's outcome be low, medium or high?	What is important to this stakeholder? What do they value? What do they comment on in the media? What are their submissions usually about?	How could the stakeholder contribute to the project, either constructively or negatively? Do they have resources that might be useful to you? Can they introduce you to other stakeholders?	What actions could the stakeholder take to oppose the project? What statements could they make to influence others to oppose the project?	What approach will you take to engage with this stakeholder? Are you informing, consulting, involving or collaborating with them? Or are you empowering them to make a decision? What techniques will you implement to engage with this stakeholder? Resource 2.1 will help you to determine the level of engagement that may be required.
For example: Our Town's Koala Action Group	Mr John Smith	L	H	This group is very interested in protecting koalas and koala habitat. Their comments in the media typically relate to the impact that development has on koala habitat, and associated impact on the species. Any submissions they make generally focus on koalas but often mention broader aspects of environmental protection as well and the adverse effects of development.	This group has commissioned research about koalas in our local government area. They could be happy to share their data.	Highly motivated group with large membership. Members make submissions on planning projects and have been known to protest at sites where vegetation is being cleared. Mr John Smith is often quoted in print and online media and interviewed for radio and TV. His statements are often provocative.	For this project, we need to proactively involve this group, as they have knowledge to share that can help the strategic planning process. Techniques will include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> meetings with Mr John Smith and a small number of members involve representatives in any workshops that focus on environmental management include a representative on the Community Reference Group established for the project.
For example: Mrs Stephanie Jones		H	M	This local resident will be directly affected by the proposed increase in density in this neighbourhood. Mrs Jones has made statements in the past about the negative impacts of increased density on her amenity. Mrs Jones has made submissions in the past, and written letters to the editor.	There is an opportunity here to build Mrs Jones' understanding of planning concepts, particularly the trade-offs required if development in this area remains low density.	It is very likely that Mrs Jones will create an action group to oppose this project, if she does not feel that she has been listened to.	It is important that we consult with Mrs Jones as part of this engagement process. Techniques will include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> one-on-one interviews direct invitations to community events telephone contact.

Implementation plan

The implementation plan is a crucial step in the community engagement process. This plan lists the engagement tools for each phase of the project or process. It also includes the resources required to deliver the tools and the timeframes that they need to be delivered in.

This step depends on selecting the right tools for the community engagement process. Selecting community engagement tools is described in more detail in part 3 of this toolkit.

The following community engagement action plan is an example only and has been created for an imaginary rural town in Queensland, with a population of between 6000 and 10,000 people.

In developing this action plan, these assumptions have been made:

- The local plan being prepared is a medium to long-term plan that identifies the needs and aspirations of the local community and outlines the actions that need to be taken to achieve these local planning goals.
- Resources are available in-house to deliver all the engagement tasks outlined in the action plan, and specific skills may need to be supplemented by outsourcing.

The example community engagement includes a range of traditional and contemporary tools to reflect the breadth of tools outlined in part 3, specifically tool 3.2.

The timeframes outlined in a community engagement action plan would need to coincide with the timeframes for the development of the local plan. Given that the following action plan is an example only, timeframes have not been specified.

Tool 2.7: Example community engagement action plan – Local plan for a rural town

Activity	Description	Stakeholder group	Actions	Resources and budget	Timeframes	Responsible officer
Phase 1: Raise awareness (timing depends on overall program to develop local plan)						
Letters to ratepayers	Prepare a letter that outlines the project and why it is needed, and outlines the engagement process. Distribute the letter to all ratepayers.	Broader community	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prepare letter • Distribute 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In-house writer • Postal costs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prepare • Approvals • Distribute 	Name of individual tasked to complete action
Advertisements	Place advertisements in local newspaper and book community service announcements.	Broader community	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prepare advertisement • Book advertisements 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In-house writer • Advertising costs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prepare • Approvals • Distribute 	Name of individual tasked to complete action
Establish webpage	Establish a page for the project on council's current website. Prepare background information and FAQs for page. Provide more detail to support information supplied in letter to ratepayers.	Broader community	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prepare webpage • Prepare content for webpage • Go live 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In-house writer • Graphic designer • In-house web team 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prepare • Approvals • Go live • Ongoing updates throughout project 	Name of individual tasked to complete action
Media release	Prepare and issue a media release for the local paper to raise awareness of project.	Broader community	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prepare release • Approve release • Issue 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In-house team member 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prepare • Approvals • Issue • Ongoing throughout project to promote events 	Name of individual tasked to complete action
Email address Project hotline	Create a project email address and project telephone hotline.	Broader community	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Create email address • Create phone number 	In-house team member	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prepare • Go live 	Name of individual tasked to complete action
Facebook and	Establish Facebook page	Broader community	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Create Facebook 	In-house team	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prepare 	Name of individual

Activity	Description	Stakeholder group	Actions	Resources and budget	Timeframes	Responsible officer
Instagram	and Instagram account. Create a hashtag #mytown.		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> page Create Instagram account 	member	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Go live Ongoing posts to promote project and create community interest. 	tasked to complete action
Community and local radio	Establish a regular interview with a planner to discuss planning concepts.	Broader community	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Pitch story ideas about the project to local radio and community radio. Establish regular radio spots. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> In-house team member 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Prepare First interview 	Name of individual tasked to complete action Interviewee
Direct email	Send direct emails to representatives of identified stakeholder groups. Email will outline the project, why it is needed, and the engagement process.	Identified stakeholder groups	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Prepare and send email. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> In-house team member 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Prepare Approve Distribute 	Name of individual tasked to complete action
Community Reference Group	<p>Establish and meet with Community Reference Group.</p> <p>Focus of first meeting will be on outlining the project, why it is needed, and the engagement process.</p>	Identified stakeholder groups	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identify stakeholder groups that could contribute to Community Reference Group. Develop terms of reference for the group. Issue invitations and conduct first meeting. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> In-house team member Catering and venue hire Staff costs to attend meeting Facilitator costs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identify groups Prepare terms of reference Approvals Invitations Conduct meeting 	<p>Name of individual tasked to complete actions</p> <p>Name of planning staff required to attend meeting</p>

Activity	Description	Stakeholder group	Actions	Resources and budget	Timeframes	Responsible officer
Phase 2: Capturing community input for draft local plan (timing dependent on overall program to develop local plan)						
Prepare print materials to support Phase 2 engagement	Print materials could include flyers, factsheets, and brochures.	Broader community	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prepare materials. • Print materials. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In-house team member • Printing costs Distribution costs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prepare materials • Print materials • Distribute 	Name of individual tasked to complete action
Main Street 'Talk to a Planner' sessions	Conduct regular drop-in sessions in the main street where community members can talk to a planner about the future of the town and the planning concepts that are being considered as part of the planning process. Identify other opportunities for Talk to a Planner sessions, e.g. local show, farmers markets etc. Capture conversations in database.	Broader community	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prepare materials. • Book space. • Establish equipment kit. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In-house team member to arrange sessions • Equipment costs • Staff costs to attend sessions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prepare and promote a monthly session throughout this phase of project • Ad-hoc sessions as needed 	Name of individual tasked to complete action Name of staff and which session attending
Instagram campaign	Launch Instagram campaign #mytown to encourage people to share images of the things that are important to them in town.	Broader community (particularly younger demographic)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Promote #mytown campaign. • Track images posted. • Share images with team and capture in database. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In-house team member 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ongoing throughout phase 	Name of individual tasked to complete action

Activity	Description	Stakeholder group	Actions	Resources and budget	Timeframes	Responsible officer
Community workshop	<p>Conduct workshop with interested community members and invited stakeholders.</p> <p>Explore range of planning topics that are being considered as part of the local plan.</p>	<p>Broader community</p> <p>Identified stakeholders</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prepare and promote. • Conduct workshop. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In-house team member to prepare and promote • Staff costs to attend • Venue and catering costs • Facilitator costs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prepare and promote • Conduct workshop 	Name of individual tasked to complete action
Conversation Toolkit	<p>Prepare conversation toolkit to encourage broader community to discuss the project and planning concepts, at home, work, school, or community group meetings.</p> <p>Toolkit includes a hard-copy survey.</p>	Broader community	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prepare and promote. • Make available on the webpage. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In-house team member to promote • Consultant costs to prepare 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prepare and promote • Launch 	Name of individual tasked to complete action
Online survey	<p>Make Conversation Toolkit survey available online.</p> <p>Promote availability.</p>	Broader community	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prepare and promote. • Make available on the webpage. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In-house team member 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prepare and promote • Launch 	Name of individual tasked to complete action
Community Reference Group	<p>Meet with Community Reference Group.</p> <p>Focus of meeting is to discuss planning challenges, community feedback and to input into planning process.</p>	Identified stakeholder groups	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conduct meetings. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In-house team member • Catering and venue hire • Staff costs to attend meeting • Facilitator costs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Three meetings throughout this phase, or as needed 	<p>Name of individual tasked to complete actions</p> <p>Name of planning staff required to attend meeting</p>

Activity	Description	Stakeholder group	Actions	Resources and budget	Timeframes	Responsible officer
Phase 3: Public Notice period (tasks described here are additional to those outlined in the Minister's Guidelines and Rules) (timing dependent on overall program to develop local plan)						
Prepare print materials to support Phase 3 engagement	Print materials could include fact sheets (including one that shows how community and stakeholder input has shaped plan), brochure, and guide to making a 'properly made submission'.	Broader community	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prepare materials. • Print materials. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In-house team member • Printing costs • Distribution costs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prepare materials • Print • Distribute 	Name of individual tasked to complete action
Community Reference Group	Meet with Community Reference Group. Focus of meeting is to discuss draft plan.	Identified stakeholder groups	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conduct meeting 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In-house team member • Catering and venue hire • Staff costs to attend meeting • Facilitator costs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Meeting 	Name of individual tasked to complete actions Name of planning staff required to attend meeting
Main Street 'Talk to a Planner' sessions	Conduct regular drop-in sessions in the main street so community can talk to a planner about local plan.	Broader community	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prepare materials. • Book space. • Establish equipment kit. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In-house team member to arrange sessions • Equipment costs • Staff costs to attend sessions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Three sessions throughout this phase 	Name of individual tasked to complete action Name of staff and which session attending

Activity	Description	Stakeholder group	Actions	Resources and budget	Timeframes	Responsible officer
Phase 4: Finalise and feedback (timed to coincide with release of approved local plan)						
Email to participants and submitters	Email participants and thank them for their contribution. Provide an overview of how all community input helped to shape process. Attach summary of engagement report.	Participants in process	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prepare summary of engagement report • Write email 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In-house team member • Editing costs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Coincide with release of approved plan 	Name of individual tasked to complete action

Part 3: Selecting community engagement tools

In this section, you will find a matrix designed to guide decisions about the tools that are most appropriate for different levels of community engagement.

In the matrix, popular community engagement tools, a description for each, and how they relate to the IAP2 Public Participation Spectrum are listed.

The following checklist will help you to consider tools and techniques that will help you to deliver a successful community engagement process that achieves your objectives. It contains numerous tools and techniques to choose from as you consider these questions.

Tool 3.1: Selecting engagement tools to achieve critical success factors for engagement

Community engagement critical success factor	What to consider when choosing an engagement tool
Timely	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Have you considered tools that allow you to inform the community and key stakeholders from the beginning of your engagement process? Choose tools that achieve this and can continue to be used throughout the engagement process. <input type="checkbox"/> Have you considered tools that will help you to build and secure a positive relationship, and the time that it might take to build this relationship? This will include tools that create opportunities for conversations with community members, and to listen to them. <input type="checkbox"/> Have you considered tools that will help community members contribute in a way that influences outcomes? It is important to time the implementation of these tools so that engagement occurs when the community has the best opportunity to influence outcomes. <input type="checkbox"/> Have you considered tools that will allow conversations about strategic planning to continue after the planning scheme is developed? Continuing the conversation will build community capacity to contribute to the next planning scheme engagement process.
Accessible and appealing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Have you considered tools that will be accessible to all stakeholder groups and community members, so that they are informed about the engagement process and encouraged to participate? <input type="checkbox"/> Have you considered tools that are appropriate for your local community? Choose tools that are accessible for your entire community, e.g. are online tools the best choice if internet use is low in your community? Choose tools that allow you to take the engagement process to the community, or tools or events that the community is interested in using. <input type="checkbox"/> Have you considered tools that will allow you to provide information to stakeholders and community members in a way that is easy for them to understand? Choose tools that allow you to present information in an easily understandable format, use plain language, and allow you to clarify issues.

Inclusive	<p><input type="checkbox"/> Have you considered tools that encourage all sectors of the community to be involved in conversations about planning? Choose tools that will appeal to diverse groups within the community, and a cross-section of the population. Choose tools that will help you to reach all community members, including those with specific needs (e.g. people with disability, older people, younger people). Have you considered tools that will help the community to make properly made submissions?</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Have you also considered how good ideas can be captured as part of the process, regardless of whether they are made as part of a properly made submission? It is important to help build community capacity to understand planning issues, and how to express concerns in relation to these issues. It is also important for planners to recognise community diversity and to include engagement techniques in a process that enables community members to express their ideas. Where good ideas are expressed using these techniques they should be able to influence a planning process, regardless of whether they are part of a 'properly made' submission.</p>
Community-focused	<p><input type="checkbox"/> Have you considered tools that encourage the entire community to participate? Choose tools that allow the community to become involved, rather than just individuals or groups.</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Have you considered tools that will help community members and stakeholders understand what is in the best interests of the community, and the trade-offs that may be required to achieve the best interests of the community? Choose tools that enable community members to explore, discuss and understand planning concepts.</p>
Interactive	<p><input type="checkbox"/> Have you considered tools that allow the community to consider the big picture? This could include a combination of tools that inform and provide comprehensible background information, as well as tools that allow community members to deliberate about planning challenges and collaboratively create potential solutions.</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Have you considered tools that provide opportunities for community members to discuss the big picture with planners?</p>
Flexible	<p><input type="checkbox"/> Have you considered that you may need to use a variety of different tools and techniques over time? Different engagement tools will connect better with some communities. Where possible, use a mix of qualitative and quantitative engagement methods to capture a diverse sample of opinions.</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Have you considered that you may need to choose a different combination of tools if the tools chosen initially are not delivering a successful engagement process? The choice of engagement techniques is crucial to making sure that community members are encouraged to participate and are listened to.</p>
Cost effective	<p><input type="checkbox"/> Have you considered the resources that are available, both budget and staff time, to deliver the engagement tools and techniques?</p>

Tool 3.2: Choosing the right engagement tools – options matrix

Before applying this tool, it is important to ask yourself the following questions.

- ☐ Have you considered the core community engagement principles outlined in Resource 1.1?
- ☐ Have you defined the purpose of the engagement process?
- ☐ Have you defined the scope of your engagement process?
- ☐ Have you defined your engagement objectives?
- ☐ Have you made sure that you understand the context that the process will be delivered in? Have you conducted thorough analysis to identify and understand your stakeholders?
- ☐ Have you defined the appropriate level of engagement for your engagement process using the resources in Part 2 and tools in Part 3?
- ☐ Have you identified the phases of your project, and determined the data that are required to support the decision being made?

An overall consideration when selecting the appropriate tool for your engagement process includes a 'fit-for-purpose' perspective. For instance, are you:

- ☐ Raising awareness of the plan?
- ☐ Gathering contributions before you begin drafting?
- ☐ Gathering contributions during the drafting stage?
- ☐ Seeking submissions on a draft plan?
- ☐ Engaging with a specific community about a new or amended neighbourhood plan?
- ☐ Engaging with the community to discuss an issue specific to that community?
- ☐ Seeking views on an issue that affects the whole local government area?

Now you are in the best position to identify and select appropriate tools to deliver your engagement project.

Activity	Detail	Level of participation					Benefits	Considerations
		Inform	Consult	Involve	Collaborate	Empower		
Print materials (e.g. brochures, newsletters, fact sheets, articles in newsletters or rates notices)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A way to provide information on specific issue or initiative to a selected audience. A way to reach a broad audience within the community. Need to have basic information on aspects of the project. Need a distribution method to get to the right people (and translated for particular groups). Need to be written clearly and concisely with illustrations or infographics where possible. Need a clear call to action for the community to get involved. 	✓					<ul style="list-style-type: none"> This method creates interest within the community. Good for broad awareness and for activating interest quickly. Can be tailored to address the specific needs of groups. Some groups, such as older people, may prefer to receive their information via traditional hard-copy methods. Opportunity for planners and other technical staff to provide information about planning directly to the intended audience. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Expensive to produce. Hard to target or to monitor effectiveness. Can miss key minority groups. Need to use plain language and simple graphics to explain planning concepts, otherwise audience may not read the material. Timing of some distribution channels (such as rates notices) can be a constraint.
Advertisements (e.g. print, TV, radio and digital)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Most newspapers and radio stations have a community events or public service announcement section which can be used to inform the public of your events and activities. Advertisements can also be placed in specific areas of interest (e.g. early general news, sports, business section) and online platforms to capture interest. 	✓					<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Fast Efficient Wide-reaching Opportunity to position planning projects positively using local government key messages Can contain a clear call to action to get involved in planning project. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Expensive Hard to target or to monitor effectiveness Can miss key minority groups.
Media releases	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Media releases need to be structured with simple and clear messages. Can be used to disseminate information to the community quickly. Find a newsworthy angle for your story and be concise when sending story ideas to an editor or reporter. Highlight elements of your project that will provide good visuals for digital and television and good picture opportunities for print publications. Even if a reporter doesn't attend an event you have arranged, you still have an opportunity to get coverage after the event by supplying the media organisation with any pictures or visual collateral collected on the day. Always provide the news organisation with written materials (e.g. news release) to ensure correct facts, names and dates for your story. 	✓					<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Relatively cost-effective Opportunity to position planning projects using local government key messages. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Relies on the news cycle for the day of the event and the news value of the project.
Websites	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To be used to provide accessible, clear and appropriate information cost-effectively to a broad cross-section of stakeholders. Websites can also be used for two-way information exchange. 	✓	✓	✓			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Can provide a link to any online surveys. Can provide lots of targeted information about planning concepts and planning projects cost-effectively. Can allow community members to ask questions and receive answers that are accessible to all. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Maintenance and resource requirements to review and refresh content, and to monitor and respond to community comments. Opportunity is lost if materials are not presented in plain language and using simple graphics.
Email feedback	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Email feedback can be an easy way to obtain ideas from the public on an issue or a range of issues. It can be used with an existing website with a feedback system. 	✓	✓				<ul style="list-style-type: none"> It is quicker than most forms of participation and may be attractive to those with little time. Allows people to ask their specific planning-related questions and, potentially, have them answered. This may help to build knowledge about planning concepts with some community members. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Emails received must be tracked carefully to make sure that they are acknowledged and, where this commitment has been given, responded to. A community member may believe that an email is a properly made submission, when it may not be.
Information hotline	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1800 number is only the cost of a local call. 	✓					<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Creates a single point of contact for enquiries and requests for information. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Activation required to generate interest.

Activity	Detail	Level of participation					Benefits	Considerations
							<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Allows community members to speak directly to a planner about their concerns and questions. 	
Town hall/public meetings	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Important to have a strong chairperson who can make the meeting flow properly. Everyone needs to have a chance to speak. Based on a central theme and participants agree on the important issues. Record each discussion and provide a way for participants to access them at the end of the event. 	✓	✓				<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Offers the community the opportunity to attend and have their opinion heard in the one place at the one time. Allows for the most important issues to be raised and gives people for whom these issues are most relevant the opportunity to discuss. Can enable community members to share issues and 'move on'. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Difficult to get a nuanced understanding from a single meeting. Challenging for quieter community members. Tendency to focus on the 'squeaky wheels' and those that are confident enough to speak in front of a large group. Potential for a mob mentality to form, which may vocally refute the factual planning information that is being offered.
Telephone survey/polls	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Technique used to obtain structured responses on specific issues to obtain quantitative measurable results. 	✓	✓	✓			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Good way to quickly assess the current awareness of, and attitude towards, planning issues. A simple vote on a topic will give an indication of the level of local awareness and support. Opportunity to capture the views of community members who may not actively engage in a planning process or attend public displays or meetings. Provides input from a cross-section of the community, which can be randomly selected and provide a statistically valid sample. Higher response rate than mailed surveys, as participants are recruited and researchers continue until they have achieved their sample size. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> More expensive to deliver, and more labour-intensive than mailed surveys.
One-on-one interviews	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Involves one person that is tasked with posing a standard set of questions to individuals. Data gathered need to be carefully analysed and reported to provide an accurate representation of public opinion. 	✓	✓	✓			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provides important qualitative information about community perceptions of planning projects, or observations about their local community, at a level of detail that can be difficult to obtain by any other method. Good way of raising community understanding about planning concepts. Good way of finding and recruiting other community members who may be able to help with other engagement techniques. Opportunity for in-depth information exchange in a non-threatening forum. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> More labour-intensive, depending on the number of community members being interviewed. Expensive.
Public displays (site displays or in community spaces that attract a lot of pedestrians)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Use local venue as a drop-in centre, e.g. a well-known location such as a library or senior centre or local primary school. Run over at least one whole day and evening to enable different people to access the event. People should be able to choose which parts of the event they would like to participate in. Create fun element (games) for children to attract families. To be used when you need to present ideas or plans to a broad cross-section of stakeholders in an area and obtain responses in an informal way. 	✓	✓				<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Allows community members to discuss their concerns about planning projects with local government planners. Allows community members to gather information about planning projects and processes, and share their views about these projects. A wider cross-section of community members is able to attend, as people can attend at a time suitable to them and stay for as long as they wish. Opportunity to share accurate information, via display materials, about planning concepts, and the planning process and projects. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Potential for lack of clarity in purpose. Requires intensive staff resources.
Small group meetings	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Technique used to generate discussion and insights on aspects of the project from a known group of stakeholders. Need to set a clear agenda and a facilitator who can keep the group on track. 	✓	✓	✓			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Opportunity for planners to have a more detailed conversation about planning concepts, processes, and projects with interested community members. Provides an opportunity to meet with community groups that support people with disabilities, older people, younger people and indigenous people. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> May need to reimburse group members for travel and offer meals if the workshop lasts longer than two hours. Not a broad sample to draw data from.

Activity	Detail	Level of participation					Benefits	Considerations
Community events (event created for project or attend an existing community event, e.g. Brisbane City Council Your Home and Neighbourhood Fairs)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Set up interactive displays at a booth. Could use methods such as stickers, comment cards and graffiti walls to obtain feedback. 	✓	✓				<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Allows people to make comments and give feedback on planning information or options presented to them through display material. Useful technique for involving people who are not used to being consulted on their views. Useful technique for involving people who may be less confident about expressing their views. Provides a link between organisations and local people and encourages long-term involvement by the community. Opportunity to use more engaging tools (e.g. games and video booths) to discuss planning concepts. Opportunity to take planning project to an event where community members gather. Opportunity to use non-planning-related activities to encourage people to attend an event where a planning project will be discussed (e.g. live music, children's entertainers, food trucks). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Activation required to generate interest in attending the event.
Charrettes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A charrette is a multi-disciplinary design workshop held over 3-4 days that involves stakeholders, the project team, planning and design professionals, technical experts and sometimes community members. Participants work in small groups, each containing a technical expert, to develop constraints, opportunities and solutions. Identify the problem or opportunity. Select suitable cross-disciplinary teams or teams. Select an expert panel who can help review output at the end of the process. Brief teams on the charrette process, which aims at delivering feasible and creative solutions within a short period. Plan for a workshop that provides sufficient time for the designers/planners to work. Encourage break-out groups that join the larger group regularly to present their ideas and approaches. Record ideas using on-site graphic recording in a format that can easily be compiled into a report, using technology such as GIS mapping tools. At the conclusion of the charrette, allow each team to present its proposed solution to a large audience of the public, planning professionals, and business and civic leaders. 	✓	✓	✓	✓		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Broad consensus of stakeholders and community representatives in a short period. Opportunity to build an understanding of design processes if community members are able to observe charrette process. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Resource heavy but an effective method for working through complex problems relatively quickly. Lead time is critical for planning, although event may be short, lead up is resource intensive and is on average six to eight weeks.
Steering groups	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A steering group is usually made up of high-level stakeholders or experts who provide guidance on key issues. Usually not representative of the broader demographic, a steering group is more a panel of experts who guide decision-making. Make clear to members what their likely responsibilities and time commitments will be. Rotate responsibility for chairing each meeting in order to engender a sense of ownership. Include external representatives to allow different perspectives and a wider experience base. Set performance indicators for the group as well as the project. Ensure clarity of both individual and group roles. Produce minutes that include clear action lists. Create time for debate of the issues in the meeting. Issue papers at least a week before meetings to allow the 	✓	✓	✓	✓		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The purpose of a steering group can vary greatly from members providing their own feedback or ideas about planning processes, to members acting as a conduit between the broader community and organisation. Stakeholder-led decision-making and input over time, depending on the terms of reference of the group. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Defining demographic relevance can be challenging. Consider the power dynamic carefully and whether all parties are adequately represented.

Activity	Detail	Level of participation					Benefits	Considerations
	members sufficient preparation time.							
Community Reference Groups (CRG)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A structured group of stakeholder and community representatives that meet regularly and operate under terms of reference. Broad-based recruitment. Advertise and promote extensively to encourage a broad cross-section of representation. Set clear parameters on the make-up of the group (stakeholder groups, citizen participation). Have clear terms of reference incorporating purpose and goals, voting behaviours (incorporating what is a quorum) and dissolution of the group. 	✓	✓	✓	✓		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The purpose of a CRG can vary greatly from members providing their own feedback or ideas about a planning project, to members acting as a conduit between the broader community and organisation. Stakeholder-led decision-making and input over time, depending on the terms of reference agreed with local government. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A relatively slow-paced decision-making process, governed by terms of reference. Can be good for broad consensus, not necessarily demographically representative.
Citizens' panels (Face-to-face and online)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Large numbers of people who are selected to be representative of the population and be a part of a panel that deliberates on a range of issues over a set period. Surveys are distributed during the time to understand community attitudes, feedback, issues and behaviour. Can track changes as well. Establish the objective and for setting up citizen panels and what the corresponding reference framework. Ask: What is the logic of deliberation, what are the limits? Brief participants on the rules of the proceedings. Provide experts to the panel. Engage independent moderator(s) to assist the process of deliberation. At the agreed time, arrange a presentation from the panel. Publish the report and recommendations. If the recommendations of the citizen panel are not followed up, publish the reasons for not following up (this would normally be done by the commissioning body). 	✓	✓	✓	✓		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> If the process of recruitment is rigorous, citizens' panels can be an effective method for securing input from a representative sample of community members over time. Provides the opportunity for community members to begin to understand planning concepts and the planning process. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Expectation of level of decision-making with a deliberative process. Can be expensive and resource intensive to manage both recruitment and management time.
Engagement apps, e.g. CitySwipe (Santa Monica's Tinder-style app designed to get the community involved in planning processes.)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To create a mobile platform to engage audiences who are unlikely to attend traditional engagement events, and to reach younger or more mobile audiences. To provide content in a way that aligns with how communities are accessing information. Can be a good way to engage people who are time poor. Requires both a good idea and sound execution planning. Provide a clear brief with your intended purpose – i.e. is it to provide detailed technical details, to support the overall visuals? Ensure you provide clear timelines and expectations and have any technical data readily available to ensure accuracy of representation. 	✓	✓	✓			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A broad range of information types can be loaded into an app including interactive content. Can incorporate immersive elements to enable the community to see locations in 360 degrees. Can gather live data. Mobile usage is at an all-time high. It is a cost-effective way to engage people where they are, essentially bringing engagement about planning processes to people's pockets. As new innovative engagement tools emerge, they can be loaded into an app, which can function as a platform for progressive advancements and additions to the engagement tool. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Resources to develop content. Time to allow for approvals and uploading of apps to Apple and GooglePlay. A degree of technological comfort is required to use apps. This type of technology may not be appropriate for all comments.
Social media (Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, Snapchat)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Calling for ideas through social media platforms. Planners can get an idea of what people like and do not like about an area or idea through comments posted on social media. This feedback can complement typical surveys, or be a substitute for surveys. <p>Facebook:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Facebook posts should be short, sharp and pose questions to increase interaction. Facebook posts with video content receive the greatest number of interactions from Facebook users. 	✓	✓				<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Social media targets an audience not captured by traditional forms of media. More direct format to submit ideas and provide feedback on planning concepts. <p>Facebook:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> usage levels are quite high good for overcoming geographic constraints. relatively easy to create and share information about a project. able to moderate and/or remove comments quickly. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Consider the type of information needed, and the social media platform best suited to this. For example, if you are interested in learning about view corridors that community members think warrant protection, Instagram may be a suitable platform. If you are asking people what their favourite place is and why, Facebook may be more suitable. Views expressed on social media are public and unfiltered. <p>Facebook:</p>

Activity	Detail	Level of participation					Benefits	Considerations
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Twitter offers open access, 140-character limit and requires you to build a following first. Develop a policy for information sharing – the what and the how requires a memorable hashtag. <p>Instagram:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Instagrammers 'like' 1.6 billion updates per day Sunday gets the highest interaction levels peak time in Australia/New Zealand is 8 pm midweek and 5 pm weekends requires a memorable hashtag good for a younger population. Instagram has a younger skew – 37 per cent 18 to 29 year olds; 18 per cent 30–49, 50+ just 7 per cent (Nielsen Statistics). <p>Snapchat:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> A photo messaging app where users take photos and videos, and add text and drawings. Users then send these snaps. It is both a messaging platform and a social network. Exists only as a mobile phone app. 						<ul style="list-style-type: none"> community will often self-moderate negative comments. <p>Twitter:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> good for raising awareness about project and planning concepts good for media attention and driving traffic to a website provides an opportunity to leverage planners with large twitter followings by asking them to post information about the project or planning concepts <p>Instagram:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> provides visual content, and allows community members to upload images relevant to the planning process and project gives a face to a project has an informal style. <p>Snapchat:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> users decide how long snaps will last before they are deleted from the receiver's devices and Snapchat's server helps to inform community members and gauge reaction to issue or planning process one of the world's most popular social apps. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> anonymity and lack of control present a challenge requires participants to have a Facebook account not always available on corporate or government domains. moderation rules addressing content and etiquette need to be established. monitoring can be labour-intensive. <p>Twitter:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> not good for deliberation need to build a following first monitoring can be labour-intensive. <p>Instagram:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> is so informal it can be difficult to explain technical concepts. may need a substantial financial investment to maintain visual elements. <p>Snapchat:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> very popular among teens and young adults not so popular with older adults ephemeral components of all content that gets shared, i.e. photos and videos disappear after they have been viewed by their recipients.
Digital video, e.g. YouTube	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increasing proportion of internet traffic is going digital video. Beware of humour and ensure it is appropriate to your topic. Keep the videos short and simple. Be aware of the lack of control in relation to comments and have a plan in place to manage it (YouTube). 	✓					<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provides visual content. Great for virtual site tours. Good for helping to explain complex planning issues using visual content. Gives a face to a project. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Technology constraints: speed of access. Informal style. Lack of control over comments (YouTube).
Online survey tools such as Survey Monkey	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A quick and effective way to get a snapshot of community sentiment. Prepare questions. Consider your promotion – how will the community know about it? 	✓	✓	✓			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Good for fast data and community sentiment in relation to emergent planning issues. Quantitative data. Relatively cost effective. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No complexity of data. No opportunity to interrogate data in more detail.
Hard-copy surveys/questionnaires	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Standard set of open and/or closed questions to a wide range of people. Conducted through face-to-face interviews, self-completion written forms, over the phone, or electronically via the internet or email. Technique used to obtain structured responses on specific issues and to obtain quantitative and/or qualitative results. 	✓	✓	✓			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Popular method of collecting point-in-time qualitative and quantitative information from a population. Good way to find out opinions of local people on a particular planning topic in a structured way that can be extensively analysed. Good way to inform people about the project. Good way to reach many people and involve those who may not be able to engage in other ways. Input from those who may not attend a public meeting. Provides a mechanism for extending a mailing list. Provides a cross-section of the community, not only activists. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Response rate can be low. To get statistically valid results, can be labour-intensive and expensive. Level of detail may be limited. Less effective in obtaining responses to complex issues. Effective analysis of data can be labour-intensive and requires a high level of expertise.

Activity	Detail	Level of participation					Benefits	Considerations
Online polling	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A quick and effective way to get a snapshot of community sentiment. Prepare questions. 	✓	✓	✓			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Good for fast data and community sentiment in relation to emergent planning issues. Quantitative data. Relatively cost effective. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No complexity of data. No opportunity to interrogate data in more detail.
Online deliberative forums	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Recruitment is critical. Consider the rules of the forum. Transparency with moderation guidelines. Consider the pros and cons of an open or closed forum – i.e. if participants need to formally register. 	✓	✓	✓			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Useful in explaining planning concepts which participants have a chance to explore in their own time. Great potential for detailed qualitative data. Licensing agreements can reduce costs. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Can be expensive – consider if you require all the functionality on offer. What data do you require and in what format? What are the technical requirements in relation to your existing website? How will you manage moderation? Will registration affect your engagement process? Will it deliver value for money? Do you need visuals? How technologically savvy do you need to be to use it?
Gamefication	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Gamefication is the use of game-thinking and game mechanics in a non-game context to engage users in solving problems. 	✓	✓	✓			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Can provide a fun way to encourage community participation and greater community understanding of planning concepts. Helps users to explore scenarios, understand the impacts of planning choices, or to understand different perspectives. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Is it appropriate to your engagement purpose? Will the concept or idea be compelling enough for people to play it?
Virtual reality	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Virtual reality is a completely created virtual world that people can be transported to using specific equipment. 	✓					<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provides an immersive experience where people can experience what a development will look like before it's constructed. Can incorporate smart city monitoring data. Rudimentary forms of virtual reality are already being used by some Queensland councils. Some property developers are already familiar with the technology, using it as a marketing tool. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Extensive cost and time requirements, which may make it unfeasible for smaller councils. Requires special tools (such as headsets) to view models. There is a potential to manipulate information as parts of the existing physical world can be removed in the virtual world.
Mixed reality (including augmented reality)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Instead of a created virtual world, augmented reality takes the real world and alters it. Existing drawings are used to create virtual fly-throughs or augmented reality to give a clear picture of a proposed project. With technology costs reducing this can be an effective way of providing visual understanding of a project. Look for a technology provider with experience in property and planning. Provide a clear brief with your intended purpose, so that the product achieves what is intended. Ensure you provide clear timelines and expectations and have any technical data readily available to ensure accuracy of representation. 	✓	✓	✓			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A cost-effective method for demonstrating what a project will look like on the ground. Mixed reality requires less 3D modelling than virtual reality, as only the elements being proposed are shown. Because the real-world is not being re-created virtually, there is a less opportunity to conceal reality. Shows the public what is proposed before it is built. Levels of detail can vary from basic massing models to highly detailed architectural models. Architectural models are created for many developments that warrant community engagement. These models can be easily converted to augmented reality models that can be viewed on any smart phone, e.g. 3Ds Max. Communicates proposals in a realistic way, and people can see what the development will look like from their point of view. Projects that have integrated mixed reality have been successful. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Requires detailed computer-aided design drawings to be meaningful. Needs to work in conjunction with other methods to capture data. Quality of finished product can vary greatly. There is a perception that mixed reality takes time and is expensive to develop, and that any benefits are outweighed by these costs. Benefits are not apparent to developers and local government. Limited by weather as the tool cannot be used in rain or very sunny conditions. Mixed reality requires a smart device to be able to view it.
Animation software	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Animation software allows for the creation of motion on a frame-by-frame basis. Each frame is the equivalent of a single drawing or image 	✓					<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Communicates proposals and concepts in a new way, potentially appealing to a new audience. Information tends to focus on essential messages, 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Animations require more time, effort and cost to make than more traditional tools.

Activity	Detail	Level of participation					Benefits	Considerations
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The frames are strung together and can be viewed back seamlessly in movie format. The resulting frames are transferred to a hard drive or USB stick for presentation to the community. Two types of animation software exist: 2-dimensional (has width and height) and 3-dimensional (has width, height and depth). 						expressed as simply as possible.	
Online deliberative forums	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Online platforms that can host information about a project, surveys that explore community sentiment about aspects of a project, and forums that enable community members to post comments and engage in conversation about the project. 	✓	✓	✓	✓		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> These platforms and forums have proved successful in community-led forms (e.g. Skyscraper City). These platforms provide a way for people to communicate with planners and local government that reflects the contemporary ways they communicate with families, friends and peers. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> While moderation of a site is often not required, some local governments may choose to moderate forums. Where this occurs in online forums, clear guidance needs to be provided about the focus of the discussion and the 'ground rules' for this discussion. There is less accountability for community members because of the 'faceless' nature of online platforms, and the degree of anonymity that community members feel that they have. Online discussion platforms often attract community members that are interested, and potentially passionate, about planning projects.
Data visualisation software	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Data visualisation software helps people understand the significance of data by placing it in a visual context. Visualisation tools go beyond the standard charts and graphs used in Microsoft Excel, displaying data in more sophisticated ways such as infographics, heat maps and fever charts. 	✓					<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provided the information has been captured, the infographics are easy to produce. Allows key facts to be clearly and directly communicated. Makes complex data more accessible, understandable and usable. Software can be built to alert users when data have been updated. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The information that can be conveyed is limited.
3D modelling and fly-throughs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 3D models allow users to view what a planning scheme or local area might look like. These models can be used to create highly realistic visual worlds. They also have 'fly-through' functionality allowing users to fly through and view different aspects of the system. 3D models are based on geographic information system technology and can display a range of information such as geological terrain, road networks, building heights and flights paths. This software provides an invaluable tool for explaining development guidelines and legislation. 	✓					<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Cheaper and easier to create than virtual reality and mixed reality models. Already commonly used to help people visualise proposals particularly for infrastructure projects. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Requires 3D modelling of landscapes, similar to virtual reality. Therefore fly-throughs also have the potential to represent inaccurate versions of the existing landscape. Fly-throughs often heavily feature bird's-eye views, which do not represent the pedestrian or resident experience of an area. While more cost-effective than some tools, can still be expensive to create. Production requires specialist knowledge.
3D printing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 3D printing is a process of making three-dimensional solid objects from a digital file (a computer-aided design model file or AMF file). 	✓					<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provides a tactile medium to help people improve spatial understanding. Allows people to see the spaces that are being discussed in 3D. This can highlight constraints that are not apparent when looking at 2D maps. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Currently expensive to deliver, although cost is reducing. 3D printed models need to be experienced in-person. Takes time to print.
Online participatory mapping	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Participatory mapping is a community-based mapping system that combines modern cartography with participatory methods to represent the spatial knowledge of local communities. Participatory maps represent a socially or culturally distinct understanding of the landscape and contain information not usually included on official maps. Maps created by local communities show elements that communities perceive as important, such as customary land 	✓	✓	✓			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Allows people to provide comments that directly relate to a space or location of current environments. Interactive. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Captures information in 2D. Current providers have made all contributions public, so contributors can see comments made by others. There is limited ability to filter contributions.

Activity	Detail	Level of participation					Benefits	Considerations
	boundaries and sacred areas.							
Wiki ideas	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Wikipedia for planning documents (i.e. a plan anyone can edit). Typically made publicly available, and anyone who is willing to create a login has full rights to edit or comment on content. 	✓	✓	✓	✓		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Allows co-creation of plans. Provides a line of sight between comments and final outcomes. Allows input directly into planning documents, saving time for the submitter and reviewer. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Limited number of software providers (e.g. Collabforge, Google docs, X wiki and Objective Keystone). May be difficult to export plans, and track or consolidate similar comments, depending on the provider selected.
Online polling	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Online polling is a type of opinion survey or questionnaire where community members self-select to participate. 	✓	✓				<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Online polls can be created to allow anyone to participate or they can be targeted to a smaller sample. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Participants in online polls are generally interested community members. The sample size can depend on how well the poll is advertised. The results of the poll may not be completely representative of the subject community.
QR code	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A QR Code can be used on signage at important sites or locations. If used, the QR Code can link people to online engagement platforms, so that they can obtain more information or provide comments. The QR code is a machine-readable code used for storing URLs, geo coordinates and text that can be read by a camera on a smartphone 	✓					<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The QR code is an easy way of keeping the community up to date. The QR code can be read easily and it doesn't take long to install the QR reader on a smartphone. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Community members require a smart phone to read a QR code.
Social media monitoring	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Social media monitoring allows planners to observe the conversation occurring in communities, relating to locations (e.g. @cairns) or key terms (e.g. #BNECityWest). 	✓					<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Captures information from a medium people are already using. Monitoring can determine what is, and what is not, valued in an area. Can solicit and capture honest, sometimes casual, opinion, which people may not deem significant enough to include in a formal submission. Can encourage involvement of specific demographic groups not usually represented in traditional engagement processes. Tools such as SMARTA have successfully monitored social media for planning purposes. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Opinions expressed through social media may not be considered legitimate or properly made submissions. Limited scope to filter 'unwanted' opinions or fringe views.
Zone cards	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Zone cards provide information to the community about a particular planning scheme land use or zone. These cards can be uploaded onto the internet in an electronic format or handed out in hard-copy format at community engagement events. 	✓					<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provides a medium to help people understand information in an easy-to-read format. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Not interactive.
Hackathons	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Hackathons are creative problem-solving forums, traditionally aimed at developing tech-based solutions to problems. A hackathon is an event of any duration where people (i.e. usually groups of 2–5 individuals) come together to solve problems. 	✓	✓	✓	✓		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Hackathons can be targeted to respond to a specific planning concern or issue. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> New participants need clear instructions on how to participate in a hackathon. The hackathon is unlikely to solve the problem at hand immediately, as ideas often need to be further developed. Hackathons need to be led by a facilitator or a subject matter expert
World cafe	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Structured process where participants discuss a question or series of questions at small tables. Each table has a host who facilitates the same conversation during a number of rounds. At the end of each round the group disperse and finds another table, or question, to discuss. 		✓	✓			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Encourages participants to share ideas and concerns with a broad range of people. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Requires experienced, or capable, small group facilitators to host each table. Requires appropriate data capture techniques.

Activity	Detail	Level of participation					Benefits	Considerations
Public art session	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Facilitation techniques that encourage community members to participate in planning processes using art to express their ideas. Art can be used to capture input from younger people (e.g. early childhood or primary-school aged children). This input could relate to neighbourhood planning (e.g. a new look for a community, street or park). 	✓	✓	✓	✓		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Includes people who communicate better through drawing or art. Can be used to illustrate the community's vision of how a neighbourhood may look. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Level of participation depends on community members being comfortable to draw or create art to explain their opinions or describe their vision.
Tactical urbanism	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Low-cost interventions delivered to help community members experience proposed changes as a trial before they are implemented. Typically, changes relate to activating streetscapes, and public and community spaces. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Interventions could include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> temporary plantings temporary bike lanes chair bombing parking day pop-up retail. Also known as guerrilla urbanism or pop-up urbanism. 	✓	✓	✓	✓		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Community members can experience proposed changes personally. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Level of participation depends on ability for community to provide feedback on temporary initiatives, and local government's ability to act on feedback.
Expert panel	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Established when specialised input is required for a project. Experts are identified and engaged to debate and discuss the project and its challenges, and make recommendations. Community members are able to read recommendations of expert panel. 	✓					<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Effective when the planning issue is contentious or complex. Useful to capture credible opinions in relation to contentious issue. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Not as interactive or visible to the community. Can be expensive to engage experts. Skilled facilitator required, and may not be available in-house.
Online workshop	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Open invitation workshop designed to gather people in an online space to hear from experts, and ask questions in relation to a specific project or process. 	✓	✓				<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provides an opportunity for community members that are reluctant or unable to participate in a workshop in person. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Interested community members need to have internet access to participate. Many online workshop platforms have been created for the education sector. Investment may be required for platform to address community expectations about opportunity to be involved. Thorough data analysis processes are required.
Community workshop	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Open invitation workshop designed to gather people from a community together to discuss a specific project or process. Many workshop techniques can be successfully applied to capture community knowledge to inform a planning process. 	✓	✓	✓	✓		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Depending on the workshop design and the problem being discussed, community workshops can be used to inform, consult, involve or collaborate. Opportunity to capture knowledge from interested community members, rather than just those community members that typically get invited to represent community sectors as part of planning workshops. Opportunity to recruit through an open invitation or to target a statistically valid random sample. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Needs to be designed to be scalable (i.e. the workshop process is successful regardless of how many or how few community members attend). Typically, expert facilitation skills are required, depending on numbers. These skills may not be available in-house. Requires activation to encourage people to attend (e.g. print, radio and online advertising). Thorough data capture and recording processes are required.
Community radio	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A way to provide information on specific issue or initiative to a broad audience. Through community service announcements, advertising or interviews. Independent media with broad reach across Queensland, although concentrated on east coast. Cater to a diverse audience including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Indigenous Australians multicultural communities religious communities people with print disability 	✓					<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Described by the Community Broadcasting Association of Australia as Australia's largest independent media sector. Independent media run by not-for-profit community-owned organisations. Provides access to groups that are typically harder to reach through mainstream media. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Stations largely staffed by volunteers, so information and engagement process must appeal to them. Hard to monitor effectiveness.

Activity	Detail	Level of participation					Benefits	Considerations
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – music, arts and cultural services communities – younger people – older people – lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, intersex and queer communities. 							
Blogs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Series of online posts about a planning project or engagement process. • Community can make comments, and share among their own networks. • Content can help to raise awareness and promote a 'call to action' to participate in the engagement process. 	✓	✓				<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Choice of author can add credibility to the information being shared, particularly where the blogger is a known thought leader or respected community member. • Blogs can build a following over time. • Comments on blogs can provide insight into community sentiment about particular issues. • Cost effective to produce. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To build a following, blogs need to be consistently written and distributed. • Ability to access blogs depends on access to technology, which may be difficult for some groups in the community.
Market research	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Delivery of a survey instrument to capture community opinion about planning and development issues. • Delivery methodology can ensure that a random sample of community members are approached, or that specific demographic groups or locations are targeted if required. • Captures quantitative data. 	✓	✓				<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sample size can be designed to be both randomly selected, and statistically valid. This can add credibility to the quality of data captured, particularly where research topic is contentious (e.g. community opinion about impacts of development or increases in density). • Anonymity of contribution can encourage community members to be honest with their opinions about controversial topics. • Allows capture of quantitative data that can 'ground truth' qualitative data captured through other engagement tools. • Provides a way to access community members that do not usually choose to engage in planning processes (i.e. the 'silent majority'). • Can provide insight into community reactions to potentially contentious planning issues. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cost depends on delivery method, sample size or provider. • Research delivery method does not typically enable opportunity for discussion of issues with community members.
Conversation kits	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Self-guided discussion that allows interested community members to explore, and contribute to, planning processes at their own pace and at a location of their choice. 	✓	✓	✓			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Allows community members to engage in a conversation about planning processes and concepts in an environment that they feel comfortable in. • Helps to build social networks within the community. • If background information is well designed and easy to understand, community awareness and understanding of planning concepts will improve. • Kits can be designed for use in school environments. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Relies on community members being motivated to access and use kit, and capture and submit a record of the conversation. • Success relies on comprehensive promotion of the kit.
Deliberative polling	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Structured process where randomly selected participants meet over two to three days to explore a topic. As part of this process their opinions are polled. Results of the poll are shared with the participants and also publicly. Polling can also be undertaken before the meeting and after. 	✓	✓	✓	✓		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Iterative polling provides insight into changes in community opinion because of deliberation in relation to a topic. • Can help to generate solutions. • Can provide insight into community perceptions about particular, potentially contentious, planning issues. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Depending on polling platform, and method of randomly selecting participants, can be expensive to deliver. • Requires a significant time commitment from community members to attend meeting and participate in polling process.
Community summit	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • An event, typically held over one or two days, that brings together many participants to explore and discuss an issue. Summits can include a range of interactive, collaborative and deliberative tools and techniques. Participants can either be selected or self-nominate, depending on approach. 	✓	✓	✓	✓		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The approach to participant selection can range from invitation-only, directly invited randomly selected community members, self-nominated, or a combination of all three of these approaches. • The selection of engagement techniques incorporated as part of the summit is dependent on the purpose of the event and the budget. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Event needs to incorporate feedback processes, so that the whole group can understand what has been discussed. • Based on scale and number of participants, event can be expensive to stage.

Activity	Detail	Level of participation					Benefits	Considerations
							<ul style="list-style-type: none">Depending on approach and topic, summits can attract considerable media interest.	
Information maze	<ul style="list-style-type: none">An open house, open invitation, informal event that provides information relating to a range of topics and issues. Participants can choose to get involved in the topics that interest them.Multiple engagement techniques can be used as part of the maze to encourage and capture conversation.	✓	✓	✓			<ul style="list-style-type: none">Open invitation, so all interested community members can attend.Selection of engagement techniques depends on the nature of the topic and the purpose of the engagement process.Food and entertainment can be provided to encourage attendance. If this is the case, event could also be referred to as a festival or a fair.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Based on scale and number of interested participants, events could be expensive to hold.Robust information-capture processes need to be in place.

Online engagement

The evolution of digital communication is changing the way people are communicating with organisations and government regarding important issues.

Online engagement enables people to contribute anytime they want, 24/7, and wherever they want. These benefits encourage people to take part in discussions and provide organisations with access to a wide range of stakeholder groups. As well as accessibility, and providing access to a large community audience, online platforms can also be interactive, playable, and highly visual. These platforms can also provide the community with real-time information and are portable, if the community member has a smart phone.

The following are some key benefits of engaging with your stakeholders online:⁹

- According to the Australian Bureau of Statistics, 83 per cent of Australian homes have internet access (in 2013).¹⁰ No other engagement technique can offer this level of accessibility.
- Most people don't have the time to get active in their community and go in-person to town meetings and consultations. Online engagement makes it convenient for people to get involved.
- Online engagement provides an accessible option for getting all kinds of people involved in your conversations: busy people, working parents, younger people, senior citizens, shift workers and mobility, vision or hearing-impaired people. Everyone can have their say.
- Online engagement tools can bring more people into conversations that affect their community.
- The online environment provides a secure space for people to learn and test assumptions, positions and options.
- Online engagement systems are cost-effective and efficient. You can engage with more participants directly, at less cost.
- Online engagement can change an organisation's culture by improving organisational transparency and responsiveness.
- Online engagement tools support community ownership at all levels of the engagement spectrum, from 'informed' through to 'empowered'.

⁹ Taken from Bang the Table: <http://bangthetable.com/2015/06/15/10-reasons-to-engage-your-community-online/>
¹⁰ This figure rose to 86% in 2016 according to the Australian Bureau of Statistics
 (<http://www.abs.gov.au/ausstats/abs@.nsf/mf/8146.0>).

As with any form of engagement, caution should always be exercised to ensure that the right tools are being selected. Some downsides to online engagement that need to be considered are:

- Stakeholders without access to the internet will be excluded unless special accommodation is made for them.
- A moderator should be allocated to manage the process and respond to questions promptly.
- Privacy concerns should be addressed to encourage participation.

There is not one perfect way to engage with stakeholders, and needs will change depending on the groups and issues needing to be addressed. Using more than one technique in your engagement process will pave the way to increased stakeholder participation, and stronger relations with your community.

Online engagement platforms

There are various platforms available to host your online engagement, some of which local councils are already using. Platforms offer the capability to engage stakeholders in a collaborative environment that encourages learning, discussion and debate.

Some popular platforms are:

- Engagement Hub
- Engagement HQ
- CitizenSpace
- MindMixer.

Email marketing

Email marketing allows you to reach target markets quickly without high production costs. Email lists can be segmented based on certain criteria, allowing you to issue customised information.

Some popular email marketing tools are:

- Vision6
- MailChimp.

Creative ideas: What's trending in this space?

Technology is developing rapidly. We are living in an age where people are more connected than ever before, with smart phone ownership increasing. Community engagement is embracing technological advancements with practitioners and software developers are constantly finding ways to advance online or digital engagement tools.

The pace of technological change makes it difficult for any toolkit to remain current, and online and digital tools can date very quickly. This pace of change can also be difficult for community members, who are expected to be able to use the latest online and digital platforms. When designing engagement processes, it is important to leverage recent technology and tools, but it is equally important to maintain the human elements that allow community members to have a conversation and build connections.

Citizensourcing

Citizensourcing is a growing crowdsourcing practice applied by governments around the world with the goal of tapping into the collective intelligence of citizens. It allows governments to collect ideas, suggestions and opinions from their citizens, thereby creating a permanent feedback loop of communication.

Citizenlab describes it in this way:

Imagine that your town hall meetings could be held online ... but 24/7, accessible from every possible device. Citizensourcing on a dedicated platform is a way for cities to get valuable input in the form of ideas, feedback and opinions from their citizens.

Early success stories given by Citizenlab are:

- MiMedellín allows citizens to share their solutions for urban problems faced by the Colombian city Medellín. More than 2300 ideas were collected, which directly led to the development of policies that reflected community desires.
- More than 60 per cent of citizens in the Icelandic capital Reykjavik have been able to provide ideas and influence city council spending through citizensourcing website, Better Reykjavik. Since its introduction, €1.9 million has been spent on developing more than 200 projects.
- 'Madame Mayor, I have an idea' was another successful platform that allowed people in Paris to suggest projects the city government could bring to life. One of these was a vertical garden project, which received more than 20,000 votes and resulted in a €2 million investment.



Participatory budgeting

This is an area that is gaining momentum, with more than 1500 participatory budgets around the world.¹¹ The process defines different ways to manage public money and to engage people in government. It's a process that enables the community to directly decide how to spend part of a public budget. The idea is based on the concept of the community brainstorming spending ideas, developing proposals and voting on ideas, with the government implementing the top projects. Some success stories are:

- New York City Council Districts, US: New York City is host to the largest participatory budget in the United States in terms of participants and budget amount. First introduced in four council districts in 2011, the annual participatory budgeting process now spans 24 council districts and residents directly decide how to spend \$25 million in capital discretionary funds.
- Durham City Council, UK: The council has implemented participatory budgeting and has aligned it to local priorities as a result of consultation on the council's budget.

Online interactive mapping and priorities

There are several online platforms that provide tools to engage people in planning processes. The MoPac South Project in Austin Texas used the Context Sensitive Solutions planning approach to seek community input to a corridor study.

Through the online platform, community members could see examples of, and prioritise, design elements that were important to them. Based on their choices, participants were then asked to review and rate multiple examples of each design element. For example, if they chose public art as a design element, they were then shown five examples of public art and asked to rate them.

Participants were also invited to indicate on a map the places they visited and the improvements they would like made. They could achieve this by dropping and dragging themed pins onto the map.

A similar online platform supported the development of the Byron Bay Town Centre Master Plan. An interactive mapping tool allowed community members to add their favourite and least favourite places to the map, indicating which places needed to change or be kept, and places they felt were unique. Participants were also able to upload photos of their favourite places and were encouraged to rate and comment on photos other users had uploaded.¹²

Mobile applications

The Californian city of Santa Monica is using a mobile application, which the *Guardian* has dubbed 'tinder for urban planning'. This app shows users images of potential scenarios (such as images of street furniture) and asks simple questions, such as: *Do you want more of this?* Community members can swipe left or right to record their response.

Downtown Santa Monica Inc., the non-profit organisation that manages the downtown Santa Monica area, is using this application to explore community attitudes to more complex planning concerns, including active transport, housing and public art.

Some organisations are exploring how technology can help innovation in the planning system. Future Cities Catapult launched the Future of Planning program in 2016. The aim of this program is to look at how 'design, data and digital tools can update how planning is conducted' in the United Kingdom and around the world. To support the launch of this program, the organisation published 'Future of Planning: State of the Art Digital Planning', which presents a range of case studies showing how technology is being used to support planning processes around the world.

¹¹ Participatory Budgeting: www.participatorybudgeting.org/

¹² Urban Interactive Studio: <http://urbaninteractivestudio.com/projects/>

Part 4: Engaging with specific groups

When undertaking community engagement, consider how the needs of different community groups can be accommodated. Queensland's communities comprise a broad diversity of people with different backgrounds, needs, values and aspirations. Observable and unobservable, they include culture, gender, age, socio-economic background, values, language, and physical and mental ability.

This broad definition of diversity goes beyond the concept of rectifying the disadvantage of target groups by emphasising the importance of an inclusive culture and valuing differences between individuals and communities. While the aim is to be inclusive in all our work, at times it may be necessary to tailor engagement processes and activities to enable some communities or individuals to fully participate on an equal basis with others.

Tool 4.1: Overview checklist for engaging with specific groups

- ☐ **Identify local representatives:** Have you worked with local representatives of diverse groups and those with particular needs to identify stakeholders and to make sure that the engagement process provides opportunities for all individuals to participate?
- ☐ **Communicate consistently and frequently:** Have you communicated consistently and frequently throughout the engagement process through local networks? Harder to reach groups are less likely to respond to general advertisements and more likely to respond to calls to action promoted through the networks that they trust. It is also important to note that while some diverse communities and groups with particular needs have embraced technology, and the engagement tools that come with it, others prefer more traditional methods of communication.
- ☐ **Provide smaller meeting opportunities:** Have you provided a range of opportunities for small gatherings? Smaller meetings, rather than large meetings or individual meetings, may enable greater participation by people with communication or cognitive barriers.
- ☐ **Timing and location of meetings:** Have you arranged the time and location of meetings to enable participation of all groups, including those with particular needs?
- ☐ **Accessible meeting locations and venues:** Have you considered the location of the meeting and the accessibility of the building, room and facilities for people with disability or mobility issues? The meeting should be held close to public transport, where available, and parking so that all participants have a range of transport options. The building, the room, accessible toilets and any other facilities connected with engagement activities (such as meetings and displays) need to be accessible for people with disability and people with mobility issues. There may also be a need to help with, and provide extra time for, transport to the venue or to provide other support to encourage people to attend meetings.
- ☐ Venues should enhance the ability to listen and concentrate, and be free of features that might trigger conditions that limit the ability to participate. You could also ask people with a disability if they need a support worker to help them during the meeting.
- ☐ **Accessible and respectful information:** Have you ensured that information is accessible for everyone? Engagement materials need to be well designed and accessible. Improving accessibility can include using plain language, Auslan or translation interpreting services, hearing loops, captions in digital video, translated

materials, or graphics that explain complex concepts simply, and providing access to interpreters. If you use a presentation, remember to provide it to visually impaired participants electronically in rtf or pdf formats, as well as explaining what's on each slide so they can follow the presentation.

- ☐ The language used when referring to people with particular needs should be free of words and phrases that stereotype, stigmatise or demean these individuals.
- ☐ **Working with existing community networks:** Have you tapped into community networks, and built the capacity of individuals within those networks to participate in discussions about planning concepts? Individuals with this improved capacity to discuss planning concepts are then able to share the information with their networks. This grassroots approach works with a range of diverse groups, including those with particular needs.
- ☐ **Time to participate:** Have you considered whether particular groups need more, or less, time to meet? Some groups, such as people with communication or cognitive difficulties, will require more time to express their views. In these cases, it may be useful to meet separately with community representatives, carers and support people to explain the topics to be discussed and determine how much time may be required. Other groups may need events to be kept short for those who need care and for carers who often have limited time away from their responsibilities.

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities

Ensuring that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities can meaningfully participate in and benefit from engagement in planning processes is an important consideration. There are a number of resources that provide historical and contextual information to better inform engagement practices with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities as well as broader community engagement practices.

The following tool draws from information provided in the range of resources summarised in this part of the toolkit, or listed in the References section. When preparing a communication strategy or engagement plan, or designing specific consultation activities to involve Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities, these resources provide additional information and assistance.

Tool 4.2: Checklist for engaging with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities

- ☐ **Understand cultural, social and political contexts:** Have you identified people within your organisation that understand the social, cultural and political contexts of the place that you are engaging about and the people that you are engaging with?

Cultural competency, appropriate skills and attitudes, and an understanding of the social and cultural contexts of place and 'country' are important to build trust and enhance engagement processes. This is all part of understanding the community that you will be working with, the relationships that exist within the community, and how the community is connected to external stakeholders. As part of this process, you could locate or create a community profile to help you understand the community and possible issues. (See 4.5, for a resource that can help with this activity.)

Where necessary, identify people in other organisations that can help you understand local context, communication preferences, protocols and channels, and the key groups and individuals to contact.

- ☐ **Identify local groups and individuals:** Have you identified local organisations and groups that represent, or work with, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities and individuals? Have you identified key individuals within the community?

It is important to identify Indigenous people with rights and interests in a place, especially those that are authorised to speak for a place. This should include men and women because they may be responsible for different heritage places and values.

Working in partnership with organisations that work with, or represent, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander individuals and communities will help to make sure that the needs and interests of these people are captured and addressed as part of your work.

It is important, where possible, to attend the regular meetings of these groups, as well as inviting representatives of these groups to be part of your process. It is also useful, where possible, to obtain guidance from Elders. Indigenous leaders can encourage people to be part of an engagement process, and this may also give you some credibility in the community.

- ☐ **Test your engagement approach:** Have you engaged with key groups and individuals to test the appropriateness of your proposed engagement methods? This will help to build community ownership of the approach. For example, asking for written responses may not be the most appropriate way to capture feedback in some communities. You may also need to consider the need for an impartial facilitator to help you establish behavioural ground rules when working with a community.

- ☐ **Communicate effectively:** Have you established where Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people want to meet, and developed different ways to communicate? Generally, to communicate effectively you need to consider:¹³

- ☐ using clear language, with jargon, acronyms and technical terms clearly explained, and consider the first spoken language particularly in remote communities
- ☐ the different meaning of words in different communities

¹³

Adapted from information found at www.dpmc.gov.au/resource-centre/indigenous-affairs/communicating-aboriginal-and-torres-strait-islander-audiences

- ☐ using a range of channels including talking posters, community radio and other Indigenous media, and audio and verbal methods if the community is in a remote area
- ☐ using local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander voices and stories to share your messages, and using culturally specific elements including language, talent, design and music
- ☐ gender-specific protocols and sensitivities
- ☐ literacy and numeracy skills
- ☐ actively providing information as some communities will wait to receive information directly
- ☐ most Indigenous languages are oral and cannot be translated into written form
- ☐ staying in the community before and after engagement activities to allow more informal dialogue to continue
- ☐ listening to people and taking the time to make sure that it is all right for you to speak freely.
- ☐ **Time:** Have you provided enough time and a flexible timeframe? Concepts of time and timeliness differ across cultures, and responses to community issues and events can affect logistical arrangements to engage with particular communities (e.g. community participation in Sorry Business). In more remote areas, the timing of visits to local communities should be driven by those communities.
- ☐ **Culturally appropriate behaviour:** Have you identified the culturally appropriate way to behave when meeting with Aboriginals and Torres Strait Islanders? This can include understanding:
 - ☐ protocols about Men's and Women's Business (including how to store any information that is collected that relates to either Men's or Women's Business, as well as whether it is acceptable to store this information)
 - ☐ protocols about Sorry Business
 - ☐ the established order in which people can speak or contribute
 - ☐ the swear words may be accepted as part of the conversation
 - ☐ that humour could be misunderstood
 - ☐ the need to dress respectfully
 - ☐ the need to use formal addresses and acknowledge older people and Elders
 - ☐ that silence is a common communication style in many communities, and may have different meanings in different communities
 - ☐ the importance of listening and not asking too many questions
 - ☐ local body language protocols, particularly in relation to eye contact, body contact and personal space
 - ☐ local protocols for relaxation after work, if staying in the community.

Resource 4.1: Communicating with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander audiences

Communicating with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander audiences is a resource published by the Australian Government in 2016 that details matters that should be considered when communicating in specific mediums including print, online, by television and radio.

This resource can be accessed online at www.dpmc.gov.au/resource-centre/indigenous-affairs/communicating-aboriginal-and-torres-strait-islander-audiences.

Resource 4.2: Closing the gap – Engagement with Indigenous communities in key sectors (resource sheet no. 23)

This is an Australian Government publication that provides information about what engagement activities should be considered in the context of making or amending a planning scheme. The resource sheet highlights consultation elements that have proven effective in the past and details those that have not been effective when consulting with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities.

This resource can be accessed online at www.aihw.gov.au/uploadedFiles/ClosingTheGap/Content/Publications/2013/ctgc-rs23.pdf.

Resource 4.3: Know your community – Key insights into Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Queenslanders

This is an online tool that enables anyone to build a community profile containing information and data about Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and communities across Queensland. Know your community has been developed by the Department of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Partnerships and the Queensland Government Statistician's Office.

Whether developing a planning scheme or preparing an engagement plan for a particular local government area, the tool provides accurate and consistent information that can be used to inform consultation processes. It is regularly updated.

This resource can be accessed online at www.datsip.qld.gov.au/people-communities/know-your-community.

Resource 4.4: Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people's engagement toolkit

Prepared by the Australian Human Rights Commission in 2012, this is a comprehensive resource that provides information on consultation with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities including background history and guiding principles for effective engagement. This resource also includes a directory of contacts that, while dated, could help to locate appropriate Indigenous language and communication services and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander media organisations.

This resource can be accessed online at [www.humanrights.gov.au/sites/default/files/content/pdf/about/Aboriginal%20and%20Torres%20Strait%20Islander%20Peoples%20Engagement%20Toolkit%202012%20\(pdf\)](http://www.humanrights.gov.au/sites/default/files/content/pdf/about/Aboriginal%20and%20Torres%20Strait%20Islander%20Peoples%20Engagement%20Toolkit%202012%20(pdf)).

Resource 4.5: Protocols for consultation and negotiation with Aboriginal people and proper communication with Torres Strait Islander people

These two documents outline Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander society and history, and the protocols that should be followed during consultation and negotiation. They specifically outline an approach to community visits, formal meetings, and evaluation. Dating from 1998, some of the information, such as agency and committee names and contact details, is now no longer current. These resources can be accessed online at www.datsip.qld.gov.au/people-communities/protocols-consultation.

Older people

Older people have helped shape the society that we enjoy today. They also have considerable professional knowledge and life experience to share through engagement processes.

Demographers usually refer to older people as 50 years and above. For the first time in history, three generations form this cohort: the 50–70 year olds, the 70–85 year olds, and those over 85 years. Given the diversity of this group, it is important to challenge ageist stereotypes. The younger cohort of 50 to 70 year olds is likely to be active, healthy and working or volunteering, and therefore more able to tap-into community engagement activities without support.

In Queensland, nearly 660,000 people are aged over 65 years, representing 14 per cent of the population. By 2036, almost 20 per cent of Queenslanders will be aged over 65 years.

Many of the groups representing older people indicate that engagement processes need to include traditional means for communication such as hard-copy materials in larger fonts, face-to-face meetings and displays. While many older people have embraced technology, there are many that have not and engagement processes that rely heavily on online tools can preclude these individuals from participating and sharing their knowledge.

To increase the participation of older people in engagement processes, work with the networks they are part of and that support them. These grassroots networks can promote events, distribute background information or capture input for inclusion in an engagement process.

Retired people appreciate being able to attend local engagement events that are held during the day and provide good hospitality. They are more likely to engage in activities where they can speak to a planner or engagement professional.

Engagement materials need to be accessible with strong visual elements. Hard-copy materials are preferred by some older people, and this demographic accesses traditional media such as newspapers, radio and television.

The following tool should be used in conjunction with Tool 4.1. It provides more specific guidance in relation to engaging with older people, particularly those that are more than 70 years of age. These tools draw from information contained in a range of resources listed in the References section including the Youth Affairs Council of South Australia's *Better Together: A practical guide to effective engagement with older people*. This guide can be accessed online at www.bettertogether.sa.gov.au.

Tool 4.3: Checklist for engaging with older people

- ☐ **Identify and work with local groups:** Have you identified and contacted representatives of local groups? Contacting these groups will allow you to test your engagement approach, and confirm the engagement methods and communication channels that older people in a particular community access. These groups may also to promote your engagement events and process through their networks.
- ☐ **Timing and location of meetings:** Have you considered whether the timing and location of meetings will encourage older people to attend? Some members of this group have safety, security and mobility concerns that would preclude them from attending engagement events at night, while others may still be active or working and prefer evening or weekend meetings. Meeting locations need to be conveniently located, well lit, with access to car parking and public transport. This information should be made available to older people when inviting them to attend meetings.

Venues need to provide comfortable seating and temperature, and be accessible. They also need to cater for various abilities (e.g. the availability of hearing loops).

Also, visiting where older people live or shop, or connecting with existing events or meetings attended by older people, could encourage participation in the engagement process.

- ☐ **Choice of engagement techniques:** Have you considered whether the older people in your community use or have access to technology? Have you considered how mobility and accessibility could affect your choice of engagement technique?

It may be necessary to provide a mix of online and mobile engagement methods with more traditional print methods. It may also be necessary to consider the mobility needs of the audience when choosing engagement techniques (e.g. a facilitation technique that requires participants to move frequently may not be useful in some circumstances).

This group is also interested in attending events, so provide opportunities for individual or group discussion. Other techniques to consider are:¹⁴

- ☐ using local radio, local newspapers or newsletters distributed by organisations that support older people (e.g. Seniors Peak Service and other seniors organisations)
- ☐ attending or distributing information through social clubs and seniors' clubs
- ☐ surveys
- ☐ peer-led conversations or engagement events.
- ☐ **Communicate effectively:** Have you considered if this audience has any particular communication needs? Generally, to communicate well with older people, you need to:¹⁵
 - ☐ listen well
 - ☐ be respectful
 - ☐ use plain language, large fonts and colour that is easy to read
 - ☐ consider whether a support person (e.g. a family member) should also be part of the discussion
 - ☐ be hospitable and, where appropriate, provide refreshments
 - ☐ make sure that electronic equipment, such as mobile phones, radios, televisions and ticket machines have large buttons and large lettering
 - ☐ make sure that automated telephone services give instructions slowly and clearly and tell callers how to repeat the message at any time
 - ☐ share status updates or outcomes with older people after the event
 - ☐ not be patronising.

¹⁴ Adapted from information contained in Youth Affairs Council of South Australia, *Better together: A practical guide to effective engagement with older people*.

¹⁵ Ibid.

Young people

While local communities are the direct beneficiaries of good planning, children and young people are the long-term beneficiaries. Given the impact that planning decisions have on the future of children and young people, opportunities to increase their understanding of planning concepts and to encourage their participation in engagement processes need to be maximised.

As with older people, young people can cover a range of age groups. Typically, the term 'young people' refers to people between the ages of 12 and 25. However, children can get involved in planning processes and projects, often with the help of their school. Principals of local primary schools are often open to providing opportunities for their students to learn more about their environment and their place in it. This is also the case with many secondary Geography teachers.

Children and young people can also get involved in planning processes through:

- local youth organisations and networks
- local sports and activity clubs
- online networks (e.g. Facebook groups)
- student groups (e.g. QUT Planning Student Association, UQ Organisation of Planning Students).

As with all groups with particular needs, working with the networks that support them will provide greater opportunities for including them in a community engagement process.

Engagement materials need to use plain language and engaging graphics. For children, engagement activities need to be creative and fun. Consider opportunities for active engagement such as story-telling, capturing stories and creating contributions using physical or digital tools.

For young people, integrate the mediums they value into the engagement process. This can include social media, online tools and music. Incorporate opportunities for young people to use these tools to create contributions.

Consider also whether young people can support the delivery of the engagement process. For example, young people could facilitate focus groups, or actively promote engagement activities as they may be more comfortable with the idea of engaging with peers than older adults.

Ensure that the venues chosen for engagement activities will not prevent young people from attending.

Consideration should also be given to how engagement outcomes will be conveyed to those who participated. Providing information about outcomes may encourage participation in future engagement activities.

The following tool should be used in conjunction with tool 4.1, which provides a checklist for engaging with specific groups. The following tool provides more specific guidance in relation to engaging with young people, and draws from information contained in a range of resources listed in the References section including *Better together: A practical guide for effective engagement with young people*. The guide can be accessed online at www.bettertogether.sa.gov.au

Tool 4.4: Checklist for engaging with young people

- ☐ **Identify and work with local groups:** Have you identified and contacted representatives of local groups that work with, or support, young people? Contacting these groups will allow you to test your engagement approach, and confirm the engagement methods and communication channels that young people in a particular community access.
These groups may also be able help to promote your engagement events and process through their networks.
- ☐ **Legislative requirements:** Have you considered if there are any legislative requirements to address as part of your engagement process with young people? Where engagement activities and events are designed to encourage people under the age of 18 to participate there may be requirements that will ensure that these environments are safe (e.g. do the people working with children have 'Blue Cards'?)
- ☐ **Timing and location of meetings:** Have you considered whether the timing and location of meetings will encourage young people to attend? Make sure that young people can access the venue (e.g. avoid venues that serve alcohol or have gambling activities). Also, make sure that meetings or events are held at times when young people can attend and when there are transport options available (e.g. public transport, or private transport provided by parents or guardians).
- ☐ **Build capacity to participate:** Have you considered if young people need support to build their capacity to participate? Helping young people to develop the skills to participate in your engagement process could help to maximise their participation. This could include learning about planning concepts or learning how to facilitate conversations with their peers. Young people can also be employed to facilitate engagement activities, and may be more approachable for young participants.
- ☐ **Choice of engagement techniques:** Have you considered the range of techniques that could appeal to young people as part of an engagement process? It is important to offer a range of informal events to encourage young people to participate. It is also important to use a range of techniques that are accessible for young people.
Also, be aware that young people come from a diverse range of backgrounds. This diversity needs to be embraced using techniques that are useful to those people from diverse backgrounds (e.g. young Aboriginals and Torres Strait Islanders, or young people from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds).
Particular engagement techniques that could appeal to young people are:
 - ☐ arts workshops
 - ☐ citizens' juries
 - ☐ focus groups, forums and interviews
 - ☐ online engagement platforms
 - ☐ SMS
 - ☐ peer-led conversations
 - ☐ surveys
 - ☐ vox pop
 - ☐ games (e.g. Minecraft).

- ☐ **Communicate effectively:** Have you considered the particular communication needs of young people? Generally, to communicate well with young people, you need to:
 - ☐ have a clear and genuine purpose that is meaningful to young people and captures their interest
 - ☐ provide interesting and clear background information and presentations
 - ☐ create informal events that are also social, fun, and have frequent breaks
 - ☐ avoid jargon and acronyms and explain technical terms
 - ☐ build an understanding of their language or slang, but do not presume to use it as these words can quickly become dated.
- ☐ **Provide feedback:** Have you considered how you will demonstrate to young people that their contribution has been useful? While feedback mechanisms are important in all engagement processes, they are particularly important for young people that may be participating for the first time. Being able to demonstrate to young people how their contribution influenced the outcome may help to encourage them to become or remain engaged in future planning processes.

People with disability

When engaging with people with disability, it is crucial to ensure that facilities are accessible, comfortable and enhance their ability to listen and concentrate. Engagement materials need to be well-designed and accessible. Improving accessibility can include using plain language, Auslan or translation interpreting services, hearing loops, captions in digital video, translated materials, and graphics that explain complex concepts simply.

Providing opportunities for people with disability to attend smaller meetings rather than large community gatherings can increase their participation. It is also important to engage with the networks that support people with disability to both capture their input to the process and to access their networks to promote engagement events and distribute information.

The following tool should be used in conjunction with tool 4.1 (an overall checklist for engaging with specific groups). Tool 4.5 provides more specific guidance in relation to engaging with people with disability, and draws from information contained in a range of resources listed in the References section.

Tool 4.5: Checklist for engaging with people with disability

- ☐ **Identify and work with local groups:** Have you identified and contacted representatives of local groups that work with, or support, people with disability? Contacting these groups will allow you to test your engagement approach, and confirm the engagement methods and communication channels that people with disability, their families and carers, access.
These groups may also be able help to promote your engagement process and events through their networks.
- ☐ **Timing and location of meetings:** Have you considered whether the timing and location of meetings will encourage people with disability to attend? People with disability sometimes need extra time to get ready in the mornings, so consider starting your meetings after 9.30 am and finishing by 4.00 pm. Make sure your morning and afternoon tea breaks are long enough so that people with disability have time to go to the toilet and eat. Let people know where the accessible toilet is

located and always check it is working before your event.

Venue choice is important when making events and meetings accessible to people with disability. Consider issues such as mobility (e.g. wheelchair access), hearing impairment (e.g. the need for an Auslan interpreter or hearing loop), and vision impairment.

- ☐ **Communicate effectively:** Have you considered the particular communication needs of people with disability attending your meeting? Always make sure the information is clear and concise, and in an easy-English format so that everyone can understand. You may need to provide presentations and other information in alternative formats, such as rtf or pdf for people with visual impairment, or you may need to provide an Auslan interpreter for people who are deaf or hard of hearing. You may need to provide support workers, or encourage support workers to attend events, to help translate information and support any dialogue. It is also important to allow enough time for people with communication and cognitive difficulties to contribute.
Be particularly mindful of using respectful language at all times. Be careful not to make assumptions about people's abilities or skills – when in doubt, ask the person if they need support.
- ☐ **Choice of engagement techniques:** Have you considered the range of techniques that could be necessary to engage with people with disability? Small or individual meetings are preferred to large meetings, so that people can contribute.
- ☐ **Catering:** Have you thought about the food and drinks that you provide at your meeting? You might need to offer to help some people with disability to get their tea or coffee and provide some drinking straws and taller glasses for water. When you are working out food for your catering, try to provide smaller items, like slices or fruit that can be easily picked up and eaten.

People from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds

Collectively, Queenslanders speak more than 220 languages, hold more than 100 religious beliefs and come from more than 220 countries and territories. People from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds make substantial contributions to Queensland, and have important contributions to make in conversations about land use and local government planning matters. New arrivals to Queensland bring with them a range of skills, experience and perspectives that enrich our society and have helped make Queensland the diverse and strong state we know today.

Some people from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds experience barriers when engaging with government. It is important to remain cognisant of the needs of the groups you intend to engage with.

Culturally diverse community groups and individuals may have varying levels of experience engaging with government. Building trust with communities and people from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds is essential for supporting positive engagement. Community groups value honesty and respect; therefore, demonstrating respect is one of the most important elements in planning your engagement.

There are community organisations that have established relationships with multicultural community groups and are continuously involved with them in your local government area. These organisations may provide social, cultural and political context in relation to the community group that you are seeking to engage. They may also help promote events through their networks and identify stakeholders, multicultural media networks, and community leaders who can support you in engaging with the community. The [Queensland Multicultural Resource Directory](#) may assist.

Effective and strategic communication is particularly important for people from cultural and linguistically diverse backgrounds, as the way information is presented, received and understood may vary across community groups. Depending on your community and project, the use of multilingual resources and interpreters may be required for people who have difficulty communicating in English. Arranging translation of materials and interpreters can take time, so it is important to ensure that you plan your communication strategies early.

When engaging with community groups, you should consider cultural protocols and practices, where relevant, including in relation to venues, dates and catering – for example, avoid venues that could exclude certain communities (such as licensed venues), avoid dates that may fall during festivals and religious holidays, and consider relevant catering requirements such as Halal, Kosher, and during Ramadan.

The following tool should be used in conjunction with tool 4.1 (which provides an overall checklist for engaging with diverse groups). The following tool provides more specific guidance in relation to engaging with people from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds.

Tool 4.6: Checklist for engaging with culturally and linguistically diverse groups

- ☐ **Identify and work with local groups:** Have you identified and contacted community organisations and representatives that work with, or support, people from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds? Engaging with multicultural organisations and community leaders will allow you to seek advice and identify which approach is most appropriate when planning your engagement and communication strategies.
- ☐ **Timing and location of meetings:** Have you considered whether the timing and location of meetings will encourage people from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds to attend? Make sure that you have chosen venues that will not exclude particular communities (e.g. licensed premises). And have not timed events to coincide with festivals, holy days, or prayer times.
- ☐ **Communicate effectively:** Have you considered the communication needs of people from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds? You need to:
 - ☐ use appropriate distribution channels (e.g. multicultural media)
 - ☐ use multilingual resources and interpreters where required
 - ☐ consider whether people would be more comfortable speaking with someone of a particular gender or from a particular cultural group
 - ☐ consider literacy levels
 - ☐ provide culturally appropriate refreshments
 - ☐ consider cultural patterns of communication (e.g. the order in which people speak at meetings)
 - ☐ avoid jargon and acronyms, and explain technical terms
 - ☐ consider whether there are trust issues in particular communities that could cause some information to be deemed too sensitive to share.
- ☐ **Timing:** Have you provided enough time in your program for written materials to be translated, and for this translation to be verified by a third party? Translating materials is only part of the task. You also need to make sure that the translation is accurate and culturally appropriate. Have you allowed enough time at meetings for interpreters to ensure all participants understand key messages and can express their views?

Disadvantaged and homeless people

For a range of reasons, there could be individuals or families within your community that are financially vulnerable, homeless or disadvantaged for other reasons. These people have a range of experiences, opinions and observations that can add considerable value to engagement processes in relation to planning (e.g. these people could provide insights about living in communities that are not adequately connected to public transport or where local employment is not available).

Work with organisations and groups that support the financially vulnerable and homeless people to distribute information and encourage participation in engagement processes. These organisations and groups will identify opportunities to take an engagement process to these individuals (e.g. visiting community facilities or service centres).

Engagement materials will need to use plain language and clear graphics.

The following tool should be used in conjunction with tool 4.1 (which provides an overall checklist for engaging with specific groups). It provides more specific guidance in relation to engaging with disadvantaged or homeless people.

Tool 4.7: Checklist for engaging with disadvantaged and homeless people

- ☐ **Identify and work with local groups:** Have you identified and contacted representatives of local groups that work with, or support, disadvantaged and homeless people? Contacting these groups will allow you to test your engagement approach, and confirm the engagement methods and communication channels that disadvantaged and homeless people in your community access.
These groups may also be able help to promote your engagement events and processes through their networks. They will also have access to facilities, meetings and events that will allow you to take your engagement process to disadvantaged and homeless people.
- ☐ **Communicate effectively:** Have you considered the communication needs of disadvantaged and homeless people? Generally, to communicate well with disadvantaged and homeless people you need to:
 - ☐ be aware of literacy and numeracy levels and provide both written and oral information, as well as written and oral ways to participate
 - ☐ provide ways for disadvantaged and homeless people to participate for free (e.g. Freecall telephone hotline, free internet access to access online materials or engagement techniques, or free transport to events)
 - ☐ provide opportunities to meet during a meal time, and provide a light meal or refreshments
 - ☐ avoid jargon and unfamiliar acronyms and explain technical terms
 - ☐ consider whether there are trust issues for some individuals
 - ☐ be careful not to use language that stigmatises or alienates individuals.

Part 5: Content development

Content preparation

Great content that hooks your stakeholders and interests them enough to find out more can make or break your engagement process. Just printing a 200-page draft plan or document and leaving it in the local council or library office is no longer effective. People are too busy and have an expectation that the information comes to them directly.

Accessible and understandable content, delivered in a range of easy-to-digest multimedia and multi-device forms, is what is required.

Tool 5.1: Ten tips for creating suitable content for engagement

- 1) When preparing engagement content, keep your audience (particularly any specific groups that you are reaching out to) and your engagement tool in mind. All content should be succinct, authentic, and tell a story. Every word counts – too many words, difficult language, acronyms and jargon, and you will lose your audience. Printed documents of all types, websites, and social media all require a different approach to leverage the engagement benefits they provide and to appeal to the audience they attract. For example, printed or downloadable reports and fact sheets can tell a more comprehensive story, websites provide information in smaller 'digestible' pieces, and social media needs to convey information in short sentences. Where possible, using a test audience to make sure that your messages are being understood can be extremely powerful.
- 2) Structure your documents so that information is provided in easily readable sections. Where information needs to be accessed via the internet, it is important that it is provided in 'pieces' that can be easily downloaded or printed.
- 3) Many planning projects involve large documents. If you are engaging with the community on these documents, it is helpful to include both a short and long summary. Your community will be able to access the information they need without having to dig too deep into the detail. However, it is important to have the detailed information available for those community members who are interested and motivated to access it.
- 4) Make sure your documents are readable across different digital platforms including desktop, laptop, tablet or mobile screens.
- 5) Preparing responses to frequently asked questions or FAQs can be extremely helpful for community members. FAQs can be made available on a website or in hardcopy. Well-considered and simple responses to community questions about the engagement process, statutory obligations or the planning project can free-up resources for conversations with community members about more complex planning matters.
- 6) Videos are an effective medium for communicating complex ideas. They can be used to explain the rationale of a proposed plan, to call participants to action, to bring up specific 'hot' issues, or give the community a voice via vox pop interviews.
- 7) Creating slideshows can help to break information into bite-sized pieces. A useful way to approach creating a slideshow is to take the key messages from your summary documents and put one message on each slide with supporting images.
- 8) Thinking strategically about planning can be difficult for people. It can help to use image galleries to stimulate people's imagination and thinking. The image galleries can contain relevant pictures, images and infographics. This approach can help when people need to think about a local area's present, past or future potential. It can also help when people need to consider potentially contentious matters such as proposed changes to density in certain areas.

- 9) To help people think about planning challenges and issues, make any discussion topics as specific, yet as simple, as possible. Most people respond better to specific questions than to broad, strategic questions.
- 10) Embed new rich media content, such as videos, photos, infographics and maps in engagement forums that are designed to encourage discussion with the community. Make this information available and accessible.

Adapted from Bang the Table

Content should engage stakeholders by making the topic of consultation relevant to their lives. Key questions to help guide the development of engagement materials are outlined in tool 5.2. These questions address the basic who, what, why, when, where, and how of your project.

Tool 5.2: Checklist to guide development of engagement material

- ☐ **Have you considered who the planning project is affecting?** If you have not already done this, there are tools in part 2 that can help (e.g. tools 2.2A, 2.2B, 2.4 and 2.6). These will define who should participate in your engagement process and who your audience is. These will also help you identify if your audience has any specific communication or language needs.
- ☐ **Do you have a clear understanding of what the planning project is, what the issues and effects could be, and what is being decided?** This will help you to gather the information that you need to clearly communicate what the project is, what is being considered, and what the potential impacts are. A clear understanding of the potential issues and impacts will help to determine the background information that you need in order to help the community understand the planning concepts being considered. Explore simple visuals that can help to communicate these planning concepts.

It is also important to have a clear understanding of what is negotiable and what is not negotiable in relation to the project. This will help ensure that the parameters of the project are always clearly communicated and community expectations are not raised.

It is important to explain how the community can influence a decision, i.e. explain how their feedback will be used and how it will contribute to the decision-making process.
- ☐ **Do you have a clear understanding about why this planning project is being conducted?** It will be important for engagement material to be clear about the drivers for a project.
- ☐ **Do you have a clear understanding of what you are asking the community to do?** Do you want them to read or watch something? Do you want them to provide you with ideas or feedback, tell you their story, or register for your newsletter? Do you need them to come to your forum? Make the call to action clear.
- ☐ **Have you communicated where information will be available, and when it will be available?** If you are calling the community to action, have you made it clear when they must act, and where they must go to take action?
- ☐ **Have you clearly communicated how the community can get involved in the project, and why they should get involved?**
- ☐ **Have you clearly explained what people need to do to make a 'properly made' submission?**
- ☐ **Have you made your messages as uncomplicated as possible?** Is your content in plain language? Have you removed the planning jargon and acronyms? Have you used graphics,

infographics, maps and images to help explain difficult concepts?

- ☐ **Have you used a test audience to confirm that you have clearly explained what you needed to explain?**
- ☐ **Have you made your materials attractive?** This will encourage people to collect and read printed materials, or click-on digital materials. To help with this task it can be useful to work with a graphic designer. It is important that engagement materials clearly define the objectives of the engagement process, and articulate exactly how the community's input will be incorporated into the decision-making process.

Part 6: Implementing your community engagement strategy

Once your engagement strategy has been approved, you are ready to implement it. This is usually the most time-consuming part of the process.

It is important to remember that it is rare to implement a strategy completely unchanged and it needs to remain fluid. As you start implementing your action plan, be prepared for it to change. Extra elements that you had not previously considered may need to be added, or certain activities may need to be amended or removed altogether.

These changes will be guided by feedback from your stakeholders and the level of success you achieve within the community. If they are not receptive, you may need to look at other ways of reaching them.

6.1 Data collection and analysis

Tracking and reporting on the progress of the engagement project will be necessary, so ensuring you have a system to collate and ultimately help you analyse input received upon conclusion of the engagement period will be critical. This will also help to manage follow-up community engagement activities for the project team (e.g. following up requests for further information or requests for meetings).

Themes and topics that are usually required for engagement reporting include:

- how many stakeholders and community members participated, including a breakdown of stakeholder groups, and demographic and geographic groups
- key issues and topics raised
- the differences in views and ideas between stakeholder groups and communities.

It is generally expected that an analysis of the community engagement data is included as an appendix in the final engagement report. This report should be made available to the public at the conclusion of the engagement process.

The complexity and scale of your engagement project, as well as budget for engagement delivery, will most likely determine how you collect and analyse your data. There are two main methods of undertaking this:

- 1) Maintaining a register of community and stakeholder details and interactions. This can be done in a spreadsheet such as Microsoft® Excel. While this is a low-cost method, offering basic data analysis for reporting purposes, it can be time consuming.
- 2) Maintaining a web-based stakeholder management system or an online engagement platform. These tools will help to track and manage community and stakeholder relationships and interactions. These options come at a greater cost but allow for sophisticated data analysis that can be undertaken simply and quickly.

Tool 6.1¹⁶ provides a checklist that will help you determine if a Microsoft® Excel spreadsheet, or similar, will suffice for your engagement process, or if you will need to invest in the use of a more customised community and stakeholder management tool.

¹⁶ Adapted from flowchart developed by Darzin Software.

Tool 6.1: Checklist for determining data analysis requirements

To determine if a standard spreadsheet is suitable for your data analysis needs, consider:

- ☐ Is your consultation short term or a one-off process?
- ☐ Do you only need to have one person at a time accessing the database?
- ☐ Will you only have a small number of community members, and therefore a small amount of data to enter into the spreadsheet? It can be time consuming to enter large amounts of data into a spreadsheet, and sometimes inefficient to search and track trends.
- ☐ Do you not need to track people and their multiple interactions with the project team during the engagement process?
- ☐ Do you only need to analyse feedback quantitatively?
- ☐ Do you have access to someone with advanced spreadsheet skills?

To determine if a basic or advanced stakeholder relationship management software package is suitable for your data analysis needs, consider the following questions:

- ☐ Is your consultation short term or a one-off process, with multiple engagement channels and a requirement for transparency in reporting?
- ☐ Is your consultation short term or a one-off process, with one engagement channel (e.g. online or submissions) and a requirement for qualitative analysis and advanced reporting?
- ☐ Do you need to have multiple people accessing the database at the same time?
- ☐ Do you need to track people and interactions and analyse feedback?
- ☐ Do you need to integrate with other systems and data from other channels?
- ☐ Do you need to conduct qualitative analysis of a large amount of data?
- ☐ Do you need to provide advanced reporting, such as attaching quotes in submissions to issues reporting, reporting issues against geographic location, or quickly tracking emerging issues?
- ☐ Do you need to manage tasks and follow-up activities from your database?
- ☐ Do you need to manage the distribution of emails or letters from your database?

There is a range of basic or advanced software packages available for purchase, such as Consultation Manager, Darzin, Voxcito, Borealis and Staketracker. Software packages are constantly being developed. Before making an investment, be clear about your requirements and make sure the software package you select can meet these requirements. Consider:

- ☐ Do you need to mainly track who stakeholders are over time and multiple projects, so that you can build and maintain a long-term relationship with them?
- ☐ Are numbers the most important measure, and can your online engagement platform provide that data?
- ☐ Do you need to conduct quantitative or qualitative data analysis, or both?
- ☐ Do you need to use the database to assign follow-up tasks to colleagues?
- ☐ Do you need to use the database to contact stakeholders and community members? Are there additional costs involved to do this?
- ☐ Do you need multiple staff accessing the database at the same time?
- ☐ What is your budget?
- ☐ Do you need to categorise issues raised, and report on these issues and trends?
- ☐ Do you need to be able to analyse issues raised geographically?

Tool 6.2: Example Excel community engagement database

Before developing an Excel database to register participants in your community engagement process, and capture their comments and concerns, make sure that you have fully understood the data that you need to capture. It is difficult to retro-fit information into an Excel spreadsheet once you have started to populate it.

Data you may need to capture include:

- date of contact (i.e. when the interaction took place)
- how contact was made (i.e. be able to select one of the engagement tools you have chosen for your process from a drop-down menu that lists each tool, e.g. email, phone or display)
- who initiated the contact (i.e. the community member or the project team)
- which project team member participated in the contact
- whether the stakeholder is a community member or represents a community group
- contact details
- a summary of the interaction, feedback or submission
- a summary of the issues raised, so that they can be quantified over time (e.g. a drop-down menu can be useful here to list the identified issues, such as environment, amenity or density)
- any actions that the project team needs to take as a follow-up to the interaction
- a summary page or tab can be set up to produce a report from.

A screen shot showing an example Excel community database is provided below.

Date	Interaction Type	Your Project Officer	Name of community member	Their organisation or group	Contact Details	Summary of contact	Issue raised	Follow-up action	Complete

Part 7: Feedback and reporting

In making a decision about a specific project or issue, it is essential to explain the process that was followed to come to that decision as well as to answer why and how it was decided. Stakeholders may not always agree with the outcome or decision made, but if the process by which the decision was made is understood, then the likelihood of it being accepted can be greater.

It is essential to provide feedback to participants of an engagement process. Participants have given you their time and knowledge and it is imperative to recognise this by keeping them updated about the process outcomes. It is particularly important to provide feedback on engagement processes where there is a significant difference of opinion between community members.

Information to provide back to stakeholders and community members includes:

- how participant input has been used to inform the decision-making process
- the next steps of the project
- details about future opportunities for input.

Never underestimate the power of a ‘thank you’ as it is always important to follow-up after engaging with stakeholders.¹⁷

The MGR includes the requirement to prepare a consultation report. Again, while it is mandatory for local government to do a consultation report under the MGR, the use of any tools in this toolkit is entirely up to each local government’s discretion. This section and the tool within it may provide useful information and guidance in preparing a consultation report.

¹⁷ Bang the Table: <http://www.bangthetable.com/the-power-of-thank-you/>

Tool 7.1: Checklist for following up after engagement and preparing a report☐ **Have you considered how you will follow-up with your community after the engagement process is complete?**

This could include a letter, email or postcard to all participants to communicate the outcomes of the project, which could include a link to the community engagement report. Following up with your community demonstrates your respect for participants and transparency as an organisation. It also helps to lay a foundation for an ongoing conversation with community members about planning issues and concepts.

☐ **Have you considered how you will document the engagement process in the report?** It is important to provide the planning team working on the project with a comprehensive report that could outline:

- ☐ the objectives of the engagement process
- ☐ the identified stakeholders, stakeholder groups and community members that were contacted in relation to the project
- ☐ the phases of the project and the engagement activities delivered
- ☐ analysis of the data collected during the engagement and how it has informed the decision-making process.

☐ **Have you considered how you will provide the engagement report to the community?** Will it be a summary document or a detailed report?

Once the engagement report has been considered by your decision-makers, you can start to prepare for the release of the report to the community. It is helpful to document how the community's input has influenced the decision, where suggestions have been adopted, and which suggestions were not adopted and why.

☐ **Have you considered how you will make the information in a community engagement report accessible to the community?** It is useful to prepare your reports in various formats (Word, PDF, HTML) to ensure that they are as accessible to the widest possible range of community members. Make sure that documents hosted on a website can be easily downloaded. Preparation of a summary document can help, particularly if this document uses a range of graphics, infographics, charts, and images to help provide context.

Part 8: Evaluation

To close the community engagement process, and to make sure that any learnings are captured, it is important to evaluate your process and the results that were achieved. Evaluation can be quantitative (e.g. the number of people involved in the process) or qualitative (e.g. feedback from community members about whether they felt they had been listened to). It can also be:¹⁸

- summative, i.e. exploring whether the process was successful and met its objectives
- formative, i.e. exploring what you can do better and how to overcome challenges
- research-based, i.e. capturing learnings so that your community engagement practice improves over time.

The benefits of evaluation include:¹⁹

- demonstrating value of engagement to internal and external stakeholders
- knowing what works, what does not work and why
- ensuring that successes are built upon, and mistakes are not repeated
- being able to adapt an ongoing engagement process to increase its effectiveness
- capturing learnings to help plan future engagement processes.
- A robust evaluation process will also include input from stakeholders, community members and participants in the engagement process.

The following tool will help you to evaluate your community engagement process.

Tool 8.1: Checklist to guide evaluation of a community engagement process

Exploring whether the process was successful and met its objectives:

- ☐ **Have you considered how your process addressed the core community engagement guiding principles?** Questions to explore here could include:
 - ☐ **How did your engagement process ensure that the planning project focused on the best interests of the community?** Have you explained what is meant by 'best interests of the community'? What engagement tools did you use to make sure that the broader community had a voice in your process? Were these tools successful? What quantitative data (i.e. number of participants) or qualitative data (i.e. feedback from participants that indicates that the process was valuable to them) do you have to support your assessment?
 - ☐ **How did you make sure that the engagement process was open, honest and meaningful?** How did you **make** sure that the community had access to the information that they needed to help them participate in a conversation about the planning process? How did you make sure that the community were provided with genuine opportunities to participate? What quantitative or qualitative data do you have to support your assessment?
 - ☐ **How did you reach out to, and encourage, all sectors of the community to become engaged?** Did you have diverse **voices** and perspectives involved in your process? What quantitative or qualitative data do you have to support your assessment?

¹⁸ Department of Communities 2004, *Engaging Queenslanders: Evaluating community engagement*.

¹⁹ Department of Transport and Main Roads 2010, *Community engagement: Resource guide*.

- ☐ **Was your engagement process appropriate for the community and the circumstances of the project?** Did you strike a balance between the community's desire to be involved and the opportunities to be involved? What quantitative or qualitative data do you have to support your assessment?
- ☐ **Did you make sure that the community understood what a 'properly made' submission was and how they could make one?** Did your engagement process include tools that enabled community members to express their ideas and influence the planning process, regardless of whether these ideas were expressed as part of a 'properly made' submission? What quantitative or qualitative data do you have to support your assessment?
- ☐ **Did you make sure that the community was informed early in the process?** Did you make sure that there were opportunities for the community to participate throughout the planning process? Did the community feel some ownership of the planning outcomes? What quantitative or qualitative data do you have to support your assessment?
- ☐ **Did you design your engagement process so that community members and stakeholders could easily contribute?** Was information easy for people to understand? Did you use plain language? Did you limit the use of planning jargon and clarify key issues? What quantitative or qualitative data do you have to support your assessment?
- ☐ **Was your engagement process flexible?** Did you adapt your approach based on participant feedback or anecdotal evidence about what was working and what was not?
- ☐ **Was the decision-making process transparent?** Were the community and participants provided with reasons for the decision? Were the community and participants informed about how their contributions shaped the planning outcomes? Did you explain clearly what trade-offs were made and why?
- ☐ **Did you deliver your engagement process for the allocated budget?**
- ☐ **Have you considered how your process addressed the IAP2 Quality Assurance Standard?**
- ☐ **Have you explored what you can do better and how to overcome challenges?**
- ☐ **Have you documented the internal and external barriers and challenges that emerged as you delivered the engagement process?** Have you explored how you overcame these barriers and challenges? A lessons-learned de-brief meeting is a useful way to explore the barriers and challenges to your engagement process. It is important that all members of the project team have an opportunity to attend this meeting so that they can explore the engagement process constructively.
- ☐ **Have you captured and shared these learnings so that they can be applied to your next community engagement process?**

Part 9: Success stories

In this part, we provide real-life examples of what is happening across Queensland. These case studies outline some projects and initiatives that demonstrate successful community engagement.

To provide us with more examples for inclusion here, please use tool 9.1 as a guide.

Tool 9.1: Case study template

Council name and contact: (for permission to print/include in the toolkit)	
Project name:	
1	Describe what made the project successful. Why was the project important to your community? Why was it important to engage your community in this project?
2	Describe how you engaged the community. What tools and approaches did you apply to seek contributions from the community?
3	Describe the results. How did your community influence project outcomes? What challenges were faced and how were they overcome?

Case study 9.1: New planning scheme

Council name: Logan City Council

Describe what made the project successful

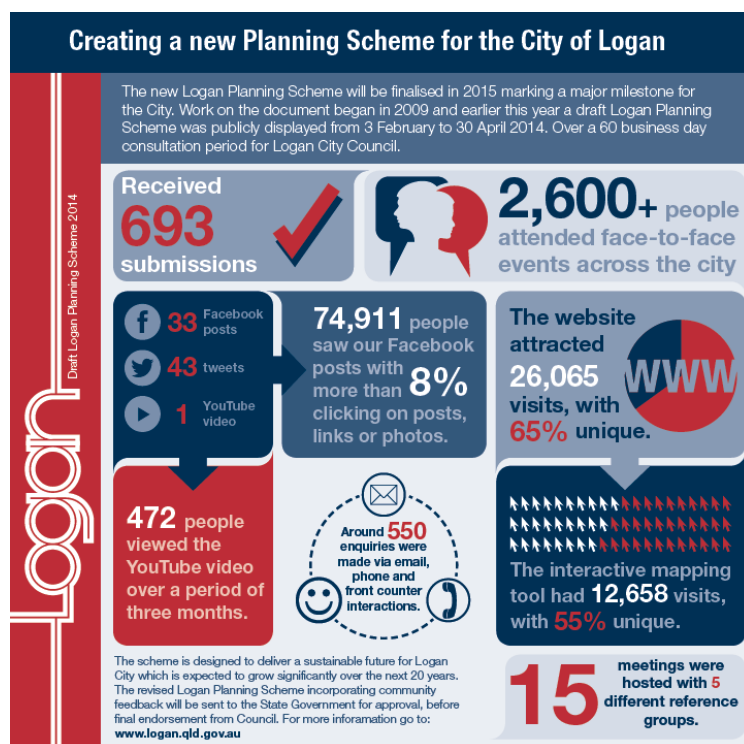
Why was the project important to your community?

A new, all-encompassing planning scheme was a must for Logan City after the expansion of local government area boundaries in 2008.

The existing Logan City local government area was merged with parts of the former Gold Coast City and Beaudesert Shire areas. Planning requirements that applied to one area of the newly expanded City of Logan did not necessarily apply in others, creating confusion for locals, frustration for developers and an ever-increasing assessment workload for the council.

Why was it important for the community to be engaged on this project?

The draft planning scheme had established a framework to support the rapid growth and development of the City of Logan by identifying opportunities for 70,000 new dwellings and 50,000 new jobs. Logan City Council wanted the community and stakeholders to not only understand and accept this new scheme, but to own it as the blueprint for the city's future direction.



Describe how you engaged the community

What tools and approaches did you apply to seek contributions from the community?

We developed the following tools for the participation process based on outcomes from previous projects, research into how the Logan public liked to be presented with new information, and a dual approach that targeted people based on their interests and field.

- **Reference group workshops** – these involved representatives of key segments of the community to enable themes and features to be explored in detail, investigations to be undertaken between meetings, and meaningful responses provided. Representatives included developers, agricultural producers, community service providers, environmental advocacy groups and residents.
- **Pop-up kiosks, meet-a-planner sessions, and planner desks** – these facilitated detailed, face-to-face discussion of specific aspects of the scheme at convenient local locations.
- **Fact sheets, web content, Facebook posts and highly innovative interactive website mapping** – these ensured all Logan residents had access to user-friendly, easily digestible information that would support meaningful stakeholder contributions from a foundation of knowledge, rather than assumption or guesswork.

Describe the results

How did your community influence project outcomes?

Significant amendments were made to:

- vegetation management offset requirements
- 'impact assessable' status of freehold multi-unit subdivision developments
- gross floor area in the context of level of assessment for retail and commercial uses in retail centres
- prohibitions on high-impact industry development.

Moreover, as a result of community feedback through the planning scheme engagement, an entire new project was initiated to review the council's ecological significance map.

What challenges were faced and how were they overcome?

The chief challenge stemmed from the fact that planning schemes are technical, complex, and rarely encountered day to day. For this reason:

- We allowed **twice the statutory timeframe** for engagement to provide the greatest possible opportunity for people to learn about the scheme.
- We provided **assistance to our reference groups in preparing their submissions** – putting their concerns into the terms most likely to influence the scheme.
- We created an **interactive online mapping tool** that enabled a variety of ways to interrogate the scheme.

Planning can be emotive – changing permissible lot sizes, population density, future planning of infrastructure all affect people's amenity and potentially the value of their properties. For specific matters, we used the following approaches to ensure maximum attention and engagement:

- We **engaged on local area plans** ahead of time, to tackle these **separately from the bulk of engagement of the scheme**. This was also not without its challenges, in one case resulting in a complete re-initiation of the planning process for that suburb, allowing more time and different engagement methodologies to enable residents to understand the objectives of the plan and influence outcomes.

- We also **engaged on the flood mapping** ahead of time for the same reason, ensuring maximum attention to the flood issue at that time so that the issue did not become a distraction from the planning scheme when we engaged on it later.

The extensive engagement process resulted in a high degree of public participation, as evidenced by:

- 15 meetings held with 5 reference groups
- 693 written submissions received
- 2600+ people attending face-to-face events across the city
- 74,911 people viewing our Facebook posts
- 26,065 visits to our website
- 472 people viewing our YouTube video
- 550 enquiries made via email, phone and front-counter interactions
- 12,658 visits to the interactive mapping tool.

Case study 9.2: CityShape 2026

Council name: Brisbane City Council

Describe what made the project successful

Why was the project important to your community?

The Brisbane City Council developed *Brisbane CityShape 2006* (CityShape) between 2005 and 2006 as a blueprint to manage Brisbane's growth for the next 20 years.

Why was it important to engage your community in this project?

In developing CityShape, it was important to gain broad community consensus on the distribution of the citywide dwelling targets that had been established by the 2005 South East Queensland Regional Plan. That plan forecasted the need for 145,000 additional dwellings in Brisbane by 2026 to support a predicted population increase of 200,000. Engaging the community meant that residents could help council decide how and where this growth should be accommodated. More than 60,000 people contributed ideas and comments. This extensive program of community engagement resulted in the establishment of a preferred CityShape – a multi-centred city with elements of a corridor city – and the development of a new 20-year vision for the city. This updated the original *Living in Brisbane 2010* (a vision for the city's future prepared in 2001) and fed into the development of a new strategic framework.

Describe how you engaged the community

What tools and approaches did you apply to seek contributions from the community?

The community had the opportunity to participate in an extensive program of activities, which provided a clear understanding of the issues associated with planning for a growing city. These activities were accessible to all sectors of the community. A clear line of sight was provided between the initial workshops, Your Home and Neighbourhood Fairs, *CityShape* Conference, neighbourhood workshops and the resultant *Brisbane CityShape 2026* and new city vision that were developed. The engagement provided a high level of transparency, with the opportunity for the community to vote on their preferred CityShape. The proportion of votes for each of the four options was announced, and the selected CityShape was a combination of the two most popular 'shapes'.

An explicit strategy throughout the process was to broaden the mechanisms through which

feedback was captured by providing innovative and accessible ways for Brisbane residents to express their views.

Approximately 40,000 residents attended a Neighbourhood Planning workshop or focus group, completed a survey, or visited one of the five Your Home Neighbourhood Fairs. The fairs provided information and provoked discussion on the many issues facing the city and ideas as to how these issues could be addressed. We also sought advice from those directly involved in the planning processes – town planners, community and environmental groups, developers and architects.

Almost 10,000 people visited the fairs and voted for one of four different shapes ('CityShapes') that Brisbane could take in the future. Attendees were invited to nominate to become a *CityShape* Ambassador and be a representative at the *CityShape* Conference and detailed local Neighbourhood Workshops.

The two-day *CityShape* Conference, held in August 2005, involved national and international speakers and facilitators. Delegates included 250 residents. On the first day of the conference delegates were invited to participate in a series of interactive workshops and present their ideas and opinions in small working groups. The focus of the second day was on identifying, debating and creating a consensus around common principles that would shape Brisbane's future. It sought to capture the diversity of opinion among delegates.

Throughout the conference, delegates were invited to provide comment on whiteboards and butcher's paper, pegboards and group 'totems' (a series of 2-metre-high columns) where delegates' images and personal messages could be posted.



The recommendations of the conference were tested and refined through technical studies and used to select a preferred *CityShape* for Brisbane. The draft *CityShape 2026* report was released for discussion purposes in February 2006 and then presented to the wider community for comment through 26 Neighbourhood Workshops from March to May 2006, before being finalised in mid-2006.

Describe the results

How did your community influence project outcomes?

Valuable public feedback from the *CityShape* engagement program included suggestions for planning the layout of Brisbane, accommodating future growth, building sustainable developments, improving transport, encouraging employment, keeping green spaces and protecting Brisbane's identity. *CityShape* led to the development of a new strategic framework for the city in the council's City Plan. Community values established through the engagement process fed into the development of a new vision for the city and provided a community mandate for neighbourhood planning initiatives. This significant engagement process established a platform for planning for the next ten to twenty years and council could leverage off this process for future planning engagement, both at the strategic and citywide level as well as through the neighbourhood planning program.

The Neighbourhood Planning *CityShape* Conference, which formed a key element of the *CityShape* engagement, was highly commended in the 2006 Robust Public Participation Process category of the International Association for Public Participation's Best of Practice – Community Engagement in Australasia 2005–2009 awards.

The draft *CityShape 2006* report that was developed from the *CityShape* engagement formed the basis of the strategic framework for Brisbane and the new 20-year vision for the city, which in turn were used to inform neighbourhood planning initiatives, with significant benefits for the community.

Most residents wanted new homes and new developments to be built around Brisbane's major shopping centres or along major growth corridors. They were looking for jobs to be located closer to where they lived, together with better local services and facilities. *CityShape 2026* helps council deliver on these outcomes.

The Draft Brisbane *CityShape 2026* proposes that, instead of pushing residents out of Brisbane and increasing the urban sprawl across the region, more people should move into existing areas with supporting services and facilities. It allows for building more units, townhouses, apartments and duplexes in selected areas. Keeping a good supply and variety of homes on the market and ensuring a range of styles, sizes and prices can help keep Brisbane affordable.

What challenges were faced and how were they overcome?

One of the key challenges was how to engage as many people as possible, with representation from all sectors of the community, and to ensure the community was sufficiently informed to enable them to meaningfully engage in the debate about urban growth. This called for an extensive program of events that would appeal to both the layperson and the professional, young and old. A series of events was developed to take people on a 'learning journey' toward an understanding of the key issues so that they could make an informed choice when voting for their desired *CityShape*. The neighbourhood fairs were extensively advertised. Local celebrities, such as bands, singers and sports people, were engaged to attract people to the event.

Further information:

- <https://www.brisbane.qld.gov.au/planning-building/planning-guidelines-tools/neighbourhood-planning/neighbourhood-planning-urban-renewal-process/original-cityshape-2026>

Case study 9.3: Ideas Fiesta

Council name: Brisbane City Council

Describe what made the project successful

Why was the project important to your community?

The goal of the project was to gather ideas for the improvement of the city centre. In April 2013, the Brisbane City Council hosted the City Centre Master Plan (CCMP) Ideas Fiesta to encourage the Brisbane community and the property industry to explore ideas for the future of the city centre.

Why was it important to engage your community in this project?

The Ideas Fiesta provided a platform for the exchange of ideas in a collaborative, fun and open way, contributing to the development of a range of projects and initiatives. It aimed to provoke discussion and excitement about the city's future and to invite the community to participate in shaping their city centre. Residents, visitors and businesses were invited to get involved, be inspired, have fun and share their ideas for imagining the future of the city centre.

Ideas raised and feedback received throughout the fiesta guided council in developing the draft CCMP to guide future development and investment in the city centre over the next 20 years. The final version of the plan delivered a coordinated strategy supported by several implementation projects for the future of Brisbane's city centre.

In November 2013, the Ideas Fiesta won an award for Promotion of Planning Excellence as well as a commendation for Public Engagement and Community Planning in the Planning Institute of Australia (Queensland Chapter).

Describe how you engaged your community

What tools and approaches did you apply to seek contributions from the community?

We held a three-week program of events across the city centre, supported by social media. More than 16,400 people attended 27 fiesta events, 1200 students participated and more than 1.2 million social media views were generated.

The fiesta featured 10 industry forums and 17 community events and showcased 17 transformative ideas from well-known Brisbane architects and designers, providing a range of interesting and engaging ways the community could be involved in shaping the city centre. The ideas and feedback received during the fiesta directly influenced the directions of the CCMP and helped council identify priorities for future delivery.

We harnessed the passion and talent of Brisbane's design, development, business, education and creative communities to offer a diverse range of events and experiences during the fiesta including workshops, forums, community events and the showcasing of transformative ideas.

We partnered with the design and development industry to present 10 workshops and forums. Some workshops explored ideas for the city centre generally, while others focused on particular areas or aspects of the city centre. The 17 community events included street picnics, laneway and park events, guided walks, films and exhibitions, providing the opportunity for the community to share their ideas while actively engaging with, and shaping, the city.

We used online channels to promote the events and capture ideas, resulting in a total of over 1.2 million social media views. The *Ideas Fiesta Wrap-up Report* provides a detailed summary of the outcomes of the fiesta.

Describe the results

How did community input influence project outcomes?

The council received thousands of ideas for the city centre. These ideas influenced the direction of the draft CCMP, which was published for a final round of community consultation between 17 September and 25 October 2013, before being finalised in 2014.

The CCMP fed into the development of the *City Centre Neighbourhood Plan*, which translated some the strategies in the Master Plan into more specific rules for development, in accordance with the *Sustainable Planning Act 2009*.

Many of our current inner-city projects can be linked back to the ideas generated at the fiesta, such as the City of Lights Strategy, the River's Edge Strategy, Buildings that Breathe, the Vibrant Laneways program and the Albert Street Temporary Event space.

What challenges were faced and how were they overcome?

The array of events at the Ideas Fiesta presented some logistical problems – for example, the closing of Albert Street to traffic to allow for a street party/picnic. We partnered with external agencies to manage some of these events.

The fiesta encouraged creative thinking, which resulted in many innovative and imaginative ideas that may not be achievable for logistical or other reasons. There needed to be clear messaging that whilst the council was encouraging these 'out of the box' ideas, they had not received council endorsement. The use of objective messaging assisted in managing unrealistic expectations.

Further information:

- <https://www.brisbane.qld.gov.au/planning-building/planning-guidelines-tools/city-centre-master-plan/city-centre-master-plan-ideas-fiesta>

Case study 9.4 Wet Tropics Plan for People and Country

Organisation name: Terrain Natural Resource Management

Describe what made the project successful

Why was the project important to your community?

The Wet Tropics Natural Resource Management (NRM) Plan was overdue for review. This plan covers a huge and diverse area – about 2.2 million hectares, from the Daintree forests of the north to the sugarcane land delta of the Herbert River catchment in the south, and then west to the dry rangelands of Mount Garnet. In 2013, funding from the Australian Government's Regional NRM Planning for Climate Change Program provided an opportunity for a new regional NRM plan – the Wet Tropics Plan for People and Country.

The region's local communities possess an enormous passion and wealth of knowledge and understanding about their environment, landscapes, industries and communities. It was important to incorporate and reflect this in the new plan, resulting in a grass-roots and community-led process.

The foundation of the process was to effectively involve and engage the community, to tap into their experience and expertise and reflect this in the final plan. There was a diverse range of stakeholders, with divergent values and priorities, so it was important that all groups had opportunities for input.

In addition, there was also a growing body of cutting-edge scientific data exploring potential climate change impacts, adaptation pathways and opportunities within the region's ecosystems, industries and communities. Although this information could have profound impacts on NRM planning and on-ground management within the community, making it accessible for application to community requirements was difficult, meaning it was not being fully considered in community and stakeholder planning, projects and procedures.

Finding a connection between the community's values and strategic priorities based on the latest science would help influence decision making at all levels, including policy makers, investors, community groups, industry, local government and land managers.

Why was it important to engage your community in this project?

The community's values and priorities were recognised as an integral component underpinning the development of the plan and contributing to achieving its purpose of influencing decision making at all levels. The wide range of stakeholders involved, often with divergent and varied beliefs and concerns, had to be effectively engaged to ensure the plan was a true reflection of what the whole NRM community identified as important.

Regional NRM plans are non-statutory, with no legal obligation for any individuals or organisations to take them into account. For this new plan to have a meaningful and enduring influence on a wide range of decision makers, it would need to be built from the ground up, with strong community engagement, input and stewardship of the planning process and final planning product.

To be successful, the plan had to be:

meaningful to a wide range of community and government stakeholders – addressing their needs and providing solutions to problems;

useful to these stakeholders – accessible and usable for decision-making, and

current – able to be updated as latest information and priorities emerge.

While Terrain led the planning process and remains the custodian of the Wet Tropics Plan for People and Country, the plan's ultimate success relies entirely on the level of community connection to, and stewardship of, the final product. Natural resource management is everyone's business, and the aim of the plan is to support and influence the decision making of not only

government and NRM professionals, but also farmers, community groups, Traditional Owners, industry, the research sector and investors.

Describe how you engaged the community

What tools and approaches did you apply to seek contributions from the community?

This planning project involved a comprehensive engagement process throughout the region. The aim was to provide structure to difficult and complex discussions, while allowing for flexibility and adaptability, and finding a balance between community priorities and scientific data. The engagement process gave an opportunity for a two-way exchange of information – the community could have their say on what was important to them, while Terrain’s planning team could ensure important science on climate change implications and opportunities was incorporated and inform community input.

There were four main stages in the community engagement process:

A general information gathering stage – this was comprehensive and aimed at identifying community values and concerns about the landscape, and its future. Opportunities for involvement included a **photo competition, online surveys** and attending **community events and meetings**. This early engagement deliberately targeted questions about vision, aspirations and concerns to get a good picture of the community’s perspectives on NRM. During this stage of consultation, strong areas of commonality were identified across the region, which became the ‘Wet Tropics Big 5’ themes: biodiversity, biosecurity, water, sustainable industries, coastal systems. This helped shape further consultation and engagement and provided structure to the final plan.

Regional technical workshops – these focused on the Wet Tropics’ Big 5 NRM themes. They brought together a wide range of stakeholders including government, community groups, local council, scientists and industry, and built in consideration of the climate science for each topic. These workshops unpacked the barriers and opportunities to achieving a set of shared regional outcomes, and identified strategies for moving forward. Importantly, the latest climate science was distilled and interpreted for each theme, and was integrated into the prioritisation process.

Local Landscape workshops – these included many skilful and knowledgeable individuals and grass roots organisations involved in managing the natural resources in their ‘backyard’. Based on feedback from participants, these workshops were particularly successful.

A transparent process was used to prioritise project ideas through facilitated discussion of a range of community priorities. This was followed by an inclusive and non-confrontational voting process, where each participant could vote on their top three priorities. The result was a list of *all* identified community priorities, which were included in the plan regardless of the outcome of the voting process, as well as *collective agreement on high priority actions*, based on the voting results.

In addition, regional and technical expertise – including in relation to climate science – was incorporated into the workshops to inform community priorities. After all the regional and local priorities had been identified, a process of bringing the two together resulted in a list of Priority Actions that have good community ownership as well as a strong level of technical and scientific input.

Tailored and focused engagement – this involved Traditional Owners, local councils and industry bodies.

Describe the results

How did your community influence project outcomes?

Reflecting the community’s needs and aspirations in the final planning product was crucial to the plan’s success.

From the comprehensive early consultation undertaken, a strong picture of community values emerged, which helped shape and direct the next stage of the process. It highlighted the diversity

of people and landscapes within the Wet Tropics, the passion of the community and their connection to their local areas, and drew attention to some of the common areas of interest. Common community interests became the “Wet Tropics Big 5” regional themes (biodiversity, biosecurity, water, sustainable industries and coastal systems), and formed the foundation for the more intensive second phase of consultation. These themes also shaped the format and structure of the plan, with priorities arranged according to the themes.

In particular, the local landscape workshops across the region ensured maximum community participation in the development of strategies/priorities for action and the process of prioritisation.

What challenges were faced and how were they overcome?

As regional NRM plans are non-statutory, effective engagement was critical if this plan was to influence NRM decision making across the region and beyond.

As with many plans, there was complexity involved in the planning process and product. This project identified a requirement to reflect diversity but also identify common ground, while reconciling divergent priorities between the local, regional, state and national scales. There was an additional requirement to incorporate new climate change science and potential NRM impacts and adaptations.

Comprehensive and meaningful community engagement was essential to the plan’s success to date. The facilitated workshop and voting prioritisation processes were particularly successful in identifying and reconciling divergent values and priorities, and providing a mechanism to develop a collective outcome.

In addition, ‘planning fatigue’ within the community was a problem, meaning time invested by community members needed to be productive. Consultation started early in the planning process and involved Terrain’s planning team ‘piggy-backing’ on various community meetings to provide planning information and updates. This minimised the amount of time and effort required from the community (as they were already attending their own meeting), while still allowing for an important two-way exchange of information.

By the time separate community planning meetings were organised, the community was already aware of the planning process and proposed structure of the final plan. The plan’s purpose had been well communicated, and the opportunity to support and influence decision making in their location or area of interest was a strong motivating factor for community involvement. A commitment made by Terrain’s planning team to capture all identified priorities also encouraged community input into the final planning product.

While the planning investment in attending many community meetings (49 meetings) and holding multiple workshops (10 Local Landscape, 9 Regional Technical) throughout the region was high, the result was that community involvement and input was maximised. Similarly, the many years invested by Terrain in building and developing effective stakeholder partnerships and working with the community meant that stakeholders were likely to invest their time and ideas in an open and honest manner.

Terrain’s simple, yet rigorous, Plan Logic enabled a clear connection between long-term vision and priority actions. The process used was well-planned and clearly documented and communicated through the plan website. Despite the complexities and specifics of regional NRM planning, the Plan Logic tied all elements together cohesively, logically reconciling tensions between different priorities and interests.

The format of the Wet Tropics Plan for People and Country as an interactive web-based plan enables anyone to have access, search and filter data according to their topic of interest or location, as well as allowing for ongoing updates. A range of online technologies were used to display and convey complex information, including videos, story maps and an interactive mapping portal, with access to many layers of relevant NRM spatial data.

An important aspect of the plan is that it is not set in stone. Priorities change, and the online format of the plan allows monitoring, reviews and updates, creating a 'living' document that can respond to changing requirements and remain relevant for a wide range of end users, for many years to come.

Further information <http://www.wettropicsplan.org.au>

Case study 9.5: Clifton Township Open Space Concept Master Plan

Organisation name: Toowoomba Regional Council (TRC)

Describe what made the project successful

Why was the project important to your community?

This project aimed to identify activities and opportunities to enhance the physical aspects of Clifton and build on the unique identity of the locale and the community.

Importantly, the youth of Clifton wanted a voice in the creation and development of their town. Existing youth advocacy being carried out through Council's Youth Leadership Program presented a unique opportunity to engage with this often-overlooked section of the community. Clifton's Youth Leader became a voice for his peers and the community, enabling Council to tap into a groundswell of action through the local high school. This was instrumental in positioning the project from within the community.

Driving the project from the youth voice generated significant community support through this sense of ownership and investment by the high school students. The community saw this as an opportunity to encourage Council investment in their township.

Why was it important to engage the community in this project?

For the project to be successful, the Clifton community needed ownership of the process and outcomes. To achieve this, Council took an exploratory approach – not dictating or stipulating, but listening, exploring, adapting and responding. Familial links throughout the town also provided invaluable arteries for the flow of lively and sustaining conversations about Clifton's status and its proposed future.

In addition, this ownership developed community confidence and encouraged social capital investments that are delivering valued dividends for Clifton and the wider region through popular park infrastructure upgrades.

Describe how you engaged the community

What tools and approaches did you apply to seek contributions from the community?

Community engagement processes for this project were a deliberate move away from the single issue-focused approach taken previously. Fundamental to this was the early establishment of a project reference group to inform both the engagement and development of the master plan. This reference group consisted of representatives from all areas of council to ensure the conversation with the community could be about the entire town and not just the open space. By collaborating effectively, the consultation was more holistic. It also allowed for some outcomes to be delivered quickly, giving immediate results to the community.

Engagement practices included:

1. Youth council survey

The TRC Youth Leader prepared a survey to understand high school students' perspectives of the town's open spaces. This was completed by 185 Clifton High School students.

2. Clifton State High School students' parks tour

TRC took 50 high school students from years 9 to 12 on a bus tour of parks in the Toowoomba region. A questionnaire was used during the bus tour to gain an understanding of how, why and when they used parks. It also prompted them to suggest what worked, what didn't and what was missing from these parks.

3. Clifton State High School "Have a Say" sessions

Two information-gathering sessions were held for students to describe how they felt about the town, and to outline their ideas about parks and playground equipment that would suit them, and the entire community.

4. Identifying park champions

The TRC Youth Leader chose 20 students from Clifton High School to become park champions. These students attended workshops to master plan the town centre and open space based on their priorities and desired experiences.

4. Community "Have a Say" Days at two community consultations at a local hall, one session at the local market and online

Similar information-gathering sessions were held to target the wide community. These sessions were promoted on Council's 'Your Say' community engagement page and the main website, by Council's CLO, letters to the high school students, via social media, in the local newspaper and through poster and flyer distribution.

Pop-up face-to-face engagement was conducted outside the local Foodworks and tennis courts on the Friday evening and 15 people made comment.

Community feedback was diverse and included commentary around gardens, footpaths, signage, lighting, road maintenance, park furniture, toilets, public art, play and exercise equipment, the promotion of parks and open spaces, events, entertainment and associated activities, camping and caravanning, and infrastructure.

Describe the results

How did your community influence project outcomes?

The project was totally driven by the community, especially the youth leader and his park champions. As a result, the Clifton Township Concept Open Space Master Plan project is an inspiring example of active community consultation.

The consultation provided insights that have influenced and will continue to influence the future capital works program for the township. Projects that were easy to achieve were identified as "low-hanging fruit" and implemented quickly (in some cases only days after the consultation). For example, trees were planted within the open spaces and the footpaths. By taking immediate action, the community witnessed a swift response to their ideas. This strengthened the relationships between the community and Council and helped to build momentum throughout the project.

What challenges were faced and how were they overcome?

Clifton is 48 kilometres south of the urban centre of Toowoomba. This distance can cause a sense of separation from the centre of the region. Effective, innovative consultation in Clifton was important to the success of the project. Being open to opportunities to change the conversation, to re-centre it to Clifton and redirect dialogue for a productive outcome was essential. The approach made by Clifton's Youth Leader presented an opportunity for a unique way of communicating and a different conversation. Council's role became a facilitator of communication from activated young people, taking their ideas and presenting them back to the rest of the community. The presence of Council listening and responding to the needs of the community, starting from a blank slate and working up to a concept that reflected their ideas, was a welcomed change.

Another key challenge was working on a parks and recreation project while still accommodating consultation and discussion about the whole town. Open space at a township level has a greater

social capital and community agenda than open space in an urban setting. How the park works within the town and its integration with the broader objectives of place-making, economics, town planning and community growth is fundamental to a successful master planned outcome. This challenge was overcome by bringing collaborators from across council to help drive and direct the project in the planning, design and delivery stages. Regular meetings of internal stakeholders ensured that programmed works within different capital works budgets were invigorated with consultation and information from the master plan.

A common response to Council projects is that it's "all talk and no action". Consultation fatigue is a significant problem with larger Councils as there are so many projects that require community involvement. Working collaboratively across council for this project grouped a series of smaller discussions into one conversation with the community, from the design of open space through to the location of trees and footpaths. Taking immediate action on some aspects of the project ensured momentum and demonstrated ongoing implementation.

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