



Community and Stakeholder Engagement Procedures



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Community and Stakeholder Engagement Procedures

These procedures are designed to provide a process that can be used flexibly and appropriately, to suit your needs.

Legislative and business unit-specific requirements must also be considered when following these guidelines. These include:

- Planning Consultation Procedures
- Recreation and Leisure Services Stakeholder Engagement Guide.

The Community Engagement Advisor (CEA) can support you as soon as you start this process.





Community and stakeholder engagement process



Decide and Analyse	Plan and design	Develop and prepare	Implement and engage	Close off and evaluate
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Decide the communications and engagement needs 2. Understand the context and scope 3. Identify and understand the stakeholders 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Set engagement objectives and outcomes 2. Identify the resources required 3. Identify possible engagement methods and communications tools 4. Identify closing off requirements 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Register the engagement 2. Develop the communications and engagement plan 3. Approval of communications and engagement plan 4. Develop and organise resources 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Promote participation in the engagement program 2. Deliver the engagement activities 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Collate and analyse the data 2. Report on the findings 3. Close the loop 4. Evaluate the process

Decide and analyse

1. Decide the communications and engagement needs

Once you embark on a project, you need to consider the impact it could have on stakeholders in the community, and how you may need to engage with them.

Consider the following questions to help you decide whether communications or engagement is needed and what level of planning should be undertaken.

Consideration	Answer	Action
Has a decision already been made?	If yes, engagement may not be necessary. A communications strategy is recommended.	Contact your Marketing Officer
Can community feedback impact the decision?	If no, engagement may be unnecessary. A communications strategy is recommended.	Contact your Marketing Officer
Does the project only impact internal City officers?	If yes, external engagement may be unnecessary. An internal engagement or communications strategy may be useful.	Contact HR
Is engagement a legislative requirement or has Council directed that it be undertaken?	If yes, engagement is essential.	Contact the CEA
Does the project have a high level of impact on stakeholders in the community?	If yes, engagement is strongly recommended.	Contact the CEA
Is there a high level of attachment, emotional involvement or interest from the affected community?		
Could there be negative consequences if the community doesn't know about, or isn't involved in the project or initiative?		
Is the project controversial or likely to attract media interest?		
Will the views of individuals or groups within the community provide further information valuable to the planning, solution or decision?		
Will the project have a long-term impact on the community?		
Does the project significantly affect existing levels of service?		
Is it important that the community has ownership of the project?		
Does the project have a significant financial impact on the City?		
Is this project impacted by, or have an impact on, other internal projects?	If yes, engagement is strongly recommended. Setting up an internal working group is essential.	Contact the CEA
Is the project complex and difficult to understand?	If yes, engagement is strongly recommended. It is also important to consider supporting communications and information resources required.	Contact the CEA



2. Understand the context and scope of your engagement

Project background

This is a crucial first step. By considering the background and history of your project, you can better understand the context where your engagement will be conducted.

Consider the following:

- What is the history of this project?
 - Has there been previous engagement on this project?
 - What previous milestones have been achieved?
 - Why is this project being undertaken?
- What is the significance for the stakeholders in the community?
 - Was this project or initiative proposed by the community?
- What is the significance for the City?
 - What is the financial cost?
 - Is there already a history of engagement on similar projects?
 - Has another business unit recently completed a similar project or engagement?
 - How important is this project to the City?
- What is the significance for partners or key stakeholders?
 - Are there any funding or project partners?
 - Is there a link with other Council/ community issues or decisions?
 - What is the approach and priorities of the key leaders and decision-makers?
- What is the environment where the project operates?
 - Is it highly political?
 - Are there low levels of trust, high emotion or outrage in the community?
 - Is there low interest in the community or is the subject matter highly complex?
 - Are there tight timeframes, long-term engagement already undertaken with stakeholders or overdue project delivery?
 - Are the stakeholders hard to reach?
 - Is there a need to understand the community better?
- What is the timing of your project?
 - What are the key project milestones and dates?
 - At what stages of the decision/ project are you involved?
 - Are there any critical dates you must meet?

Level of impact

Understanding the level of impact a project has on stakeholders in the community can help determine the appropriate level of engagement, amount of planning, suitable methods and resources required. Remember to speak with other business units when assessing the level of impact and be aware that the level of impact may change over the life of a project.

Assess your project against the following matrix to determine the level of impact.

Level of impact	Description	Engagement plan required	Criteria (one or more may apply)	Examples
Significant	Issue has higher level of real or perceived impact on the whole – or large parts – of the City	An engagement plan is essential	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Existing or potential for conflict or controversy High level of interest from the community Potential to impact on regional or state strategies or direction Significant impact on attributes that are valued by the City for example art, culture, multiculturalism, inclusion Any impact on health, safety and wellbeing of the broader community 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Community, strategic and annual plans Significant Council policies/ strategies/plans or local law for example Access and Inclusion Plan, Capital Works Program, Environmental Management Strategy Major changes to City-wide services, for example waste management or child care Provision, removal or major changes to a regional facility or infrastructure
High	Issue has a higher level of real or perceived impact on a specific suburb, local area, community or user group	An engagement plan is essential	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Removal or significant changes to a facility or service to a local community/user group Existing or potential for conflict or controversy at a local level High level of community or sectional interest 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Removal or relocation of a local playground Changes to valued youth activities Major street work or road closure Significant changes to car parking arrangements in local shopping centre Development changes to sports grounds, parks or local facilities
Moderate	Issue has a lower level of real or perceived impact on the whole or large parts of the City	An engagement plan is desirable	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Potential for some controversy or conflict Potential for some, although not significant, impact on regional or state strategies or direction Minor changes to recurring large scale programs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Minor changes in customer service processes Minor changes to City-wide activities and services Review of community needs and plans, for example Capital Works Program review, community satisfaction survey Non-contentious changes to fees and charges
Low	Issue has lower level of real or perceived impact on a specific suburb, local areas, community or user group	An engagement plan may not be required A communications strategy is highly recommended	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Minor changes to a facility or services at a local level Low potential for controversy or conflict at local level 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Minor changes to, or like-for-like replacement of local playground Normal street works Changes in time and venue to a local community activity Development of a localised program, for example community garden, leisure program

Setting the scope of the engagement

It is important to understand the focus or topic of your project. Clarify the purpose of the engagement, the level that participants' feedback and contributions can be taken on board as well as any parameters you need to work within.

Consider the aspects of your project that stakeholders can influence, and those they cannot. What is negotiable and what is not?

What sources of information do you need to consider and do you need to engage with Executive or Council first to clarify this scope?

By identifying the scope, we can help manage stakeholders' expectations of how much influence they can have in the engagement process. It will also help when selecting the appropriate methods and tools as well as developing consistent and effective key messaging.

a) Purpose

To articulate why you are undertaking community and stakeholder engagement, consider which of the following may apply:

- Provide information to ensure stakeholders clearly understand the issue or project
- Satisfy legal requirements
- Understand reactions, implications and consequences of the project
- Generate alternatives, new ideas and options
- Improve quality of policy, strategy or plans
- Develop positive relationships
- Community capacity and capability building
- Gain buy-in from the community
- Generate support for the action
- Behaviour change
- Create community ownership and support for the project
- Ensure the project delivers what the community wants and needs
- Gain feedback on options to help make a better decision
- Satisfy a directive from Council
- Investigate solutions to help the development of options
- Clearly understand the problem or issue
- Gauge public support
- Gather data to guide future decisions
- Reach an agreement or resolve a dispute
- Identify a problem or an opportunity to address it.

b) Parameters – limitations and negotiables

What must you consider, include or accommodate in the engagement?

Be clear about the things that can and can't be influenced.

By understanding the negotiable and non-negotiable aspects of the engagement we can help balance the expectations of our stakeholders with any legislative, technical or financial requirements that may apply.

It is important to identify relevant and current legislative and statutory regulations by considering:

- Minimum required standards for engagement
- Applicable acts and sections
- Relevant Council plans, policies, strategies or reports
- Any parts of the engagement process supported or constrained by legislation.

Where possible, move beyond compliance to create better opportunities for engagement as the City is committed to best-practice.

Possible legislation to consider:

- WA Local Government Act 1995 and Regulations
- Integrated Planning Reporting
- Health Act 1911 and associated regulations
- Metropolitan Region Town Planning Scheme Act 1959
- Planning and Development (Local Planning Schemes) Regulations 2015
- Heritage of WA Act 1990
- Environmental Protection Act 1986
- Bush Fires Act 1954 and associated regulations
- Occupational Health, Safety and Welfare Act 1984 and associated regulations
- Privacy Act 1998
- Disability Services Act 1993 and Equal Opportunity Act 1984.

Please seek advice from your Business Unit Manager or the City's Governance Officer for more information.



c) Level of engagement

The level of engagement can be determined by considering the context, purpose and parameters identified earlier in this step.

The IAP2 Spectrum, on page 12, can be used as a tool to help identify the levels you might engage with stakeholders and the community. This will help articulate the objectives of engagement and identify appropriate methods that will best achieve them.

The level of engagement can be different for each stakeholder group or project stage.

It is important to reiterate that the 'Inform' stage is not a level of engagement in isolation, but should be an integral component of all engagement activities and used throughout the project.

Engagement risks

Consider any possible risks associated with the project or engagement process and assess the potential impact and likely severity. Identify what you could do to prevent these issues or risks from occurring, or to minimise their impact.

Risks could be:

- Financial
- Reputational
- Related to the health and safety of staff or stakeholders
- Related to the success of the project or the engagement process.

Determining an approvals protocol with your manager or director is an important consideration, which may help minimise the engagement risks identified.

Contact the Senior Coordinator Communications if you identify media interest as a risk.

Please refer to the Corporate Risk Management page for more information about the City's commitment to risk management.

3. Identify and understand your stakeholders

The City has diverse internal and external stakeholders with varying levels of interest, influence, power or impact relative to an issue.

It is important to identify the stakeholders of your project, and understand the level of influence or interest they may have.

Going through this step thoroughly will help identify any additional issues and risks to your project or engagement. It will assist with targeting your resources and efforts effectively, deciding on the appropriate levels of participation in the engagement process, timing of activities and recognising the appropriate methods and tools to use.

The City's list of stakeholder categories, on page seven, can be used to help identify those stakeholders with a relationship to your project.

When identifying your stakeholders consider:

- Adversaries or advocates for the project
- Those affected by, interested in or in a position to impact the process or project outcomes
- Those that have legitimacy in decision-making or expertise that would be of benefit
- Those that may care or have concerns about the project.

It is not necessary to actively engage with groups that have no interest in the issue. However, you may want to provide general information to these stakeholders or try to increase their interest in the project to encourage participation.

It is also important to consider the groups that may find it difficult to participate in the process. For example, culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD), people with disability, older people, youth and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders.

Make sure to contact or seek advice from staff who have established working relationships with the stakeholder groups you identify as relevant to your project. They may be able to provide useful suggestions to help the success of your engagement, or alert you to any unfamiliar issues or concerns that may arise.

Internal stakeholders

All City staff members have an important role to play in providing consistent messaging and contributing to corporate knowledge. It is vital that we all ensure engagement activities are conducted in a coordinated and consistently high standard for the benefit of the organisation as a whole.

Identifying and considering the internal stakeholders impacted by a project, or in a position to impact a project, is important and should be a priority to facilitate the best possible outcomes.

Are there any policies, strategies or plans that need to be aligned with or considered?

Are there existing relationships or engagement activities you need to be aware of and consider?

By building great connections with other teams and business units you could find ways to capitalise on resources and achieve more together through internal collaboration.

Council

Remember to include Council when identifying internal and external stakeholders, as they are the final decision-makers for most projects that the City undertakes. It is particularly important to identify those Ward Councillors whose communities are affected.

The experience a stakeholder has as part of your engagement will not only impact your project, but will contribute to their perception of, and future interactions with the City. Having a coordinated approach to managing stakeholder relationships is vital to the City's success in achieving its overarching strategic objectives and delivering successful outcomes.

Plan and design

1. Set engagement objectives and outcomes

In planning your engagement, it is important to set SMART (Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant, and Time-bound) objectives based on the purpose of your engagement.

Engagement objectives are statements of intention that help identify realistic targets and desired outcomes.

They can be thought of as 'success statements' and will form the basis of evaluating the engagement process.

The objectives may be different, depending on the stakeholder or phase of the project.

Some things to consider when determining the engagement objectives are:

- How do you want stakeholders to feel about the process?
- What outputs or outcomes do you want to achieve by undertaking engagement?
- Who are the decision-makers and what do you want them to understand?
- What question/s do you want answered?
- What do you want your stakeholders to understand?
- What will you do with the feedback you receive?
- Who do you need to hear from?
- What do you want to understand from your stakeholders?
- Do you want the stakeholders in the community to have ownership of the project?
- What questions have been answered already?
- Do you want to generate ideas or test existing assumptions and if so, what are they?
- How will the engagement be measured?
- What tangible deliverables will your engagement produce?
- What quality or quantity will you use to judge fitness for purpose?
- What are the negotiables and non-negotiables?

Some examples of SMART objectives are:

- To receive 600 survey responses, representative of the affected community, by 20 February 2018.
- By late June 2019, we will have collaborated with community members to develop 8-10 alternate solutions for Ravensthorpe Road, to bypass sensitive ecological features.
- To obtain 100 per cent satisfaction of participants in the engagement process by the conclusion of the engagement activity.

It is also useful to consider the communications objectives for your engagement program. This will help determine the most appropriate marketing and communications tools to use.

What support will you need to promote the engagement activity? Will providing additional information help stakeholders understand the situation, especially if the project is of a complex or contentious nature?

2. Identify resources required

Consider the following three resources that will be needed for your engagement activity or program:

Budget

When determining your budget, consider the engagement activities as well as the communications and marketing support needed to raise awareness and encourage participation. You may also need to factor in the development and production of information resources if the matter is of a complex or contentious nature.

Consider: Collateral development, graphic design, photography, copy writing and editing/proofing content, venue hire, facilitators, consultants, catering, advertising, promotion, interpreters, mail-outs, etc.

Time

It may be useful to work backwards from a final milestone, to determine how much time is available for the engagement process or activity.

Think about the required approvals, level of engagement and the engagement method/s you will use. Allow time for minor setbacks due to unforeseen circumstances.

Are there timeframes stipulated by legislation for the engagement activity that need to be factored in?

Do you have enough time to promote the engagement, encourage participation, disseminate information and allow stakeholders to make an informed and considered response?

Consider the dates of other community activities and how they might affect the engagement activity, such as school holidays and public holidays.

It is recommended that the community is not involved with any engagement activity during the months of December and January.

The timeframe will also depend on factors such as the impact and complexity of the project, possibility of contentiousness, methods used and internal resources.

A minimum six-week lead-in time is required for marketing and communications. This includes communications planning, content development and associated editing and proof reading, graphic design, publication and media deadlines and approvals processes.

A minimum of ten weeks before the start of an engagement activity is suggested, although it is best to start preparing and registering the engagement with the Communications and Engagement team as early as the project scoping stage.

Human resources

Consider the number of people, and the level of skills required to deliver the engagement program or activity.

It may be necessary to use external consultants or facilitators in cases where an issue is controversial, as an external facilitator can address perception management and assure participants of a fair process.

3. Identify possible engagement methods and communications tools

Engagement methods are the touch points of the engagement activity – they provide a way for information to be shared between you and your identified stakeholders.

There are a wide range of digital and traditional methods of engagement available for different purposes and stakeholders. It is important to consider the purpose and stakeholders of your engagement plan first, before deciding on the appropriate method/s you are going to use.

Consider the following factors:

- Engagement level, purpose and objectives
- Legislative requirements
- Professional skills required
- Complexity of information
- Timing and duration
- Budget
- Political significance
- Stakeholders' access and inclusion requirements.

All community engagement should have a presence on the City's online engagement hub – Your Say Stirling – and digital methods of engagement considered as part of the engagement strategy.

Communications tools – the methods for engagement at the 'inform' level

Communications and marketing are essential in supporting successful engagement. It is important to consider the most appropriate communications tools and channels that will encourage participation by:

- Promoting the engagement activities
- Supporting meaningful participation by providing appropriate, accessible and easy to understand information.

Make sure to be clear about the key messages you will communicate to stakeholders. This will avoid confusion and ensure consistency across all channels.

Your Marketing Officer will be able to assist you to determine the most effective paid communications channels to help you promote your engagement, as well as manage the production of collateral such as brochures, flyers, video content and publications.

4. Identify closing off requirements

Data collection and analysis

Consider how feedback and other information will be collected and analysed. The online Your Say Stirling engagement hub can be used for this purpose.

The following might also be used to collect information:

- Stakeholder database – this must be maintained over the life of the project
- Commitments register – this document summarises the commitments made by the City or stakeholder during the engagement process. It is most commonly used during a project planning phase, and later handed over to the project delivery team
- Meeting minutes – these need to be maintained and circulated to all members in a timely manner.

Reporting and feedback

Consider how and when you will let stakeholders know how their input was considered. What other key dates or milestones need to be communicated? How will the findings be reported to the final decision-maker?

Evaluation

Evaluation is about learning what worked well, what didn't work well and what can be done better next time.

Consider how you will measure the success of your engagement activity or program against the objectives you have set.

It is also important to monitor each element throughout the process and adjust the plan if needed.

Develop and prepare

1. Register the engagement

Once you have identified the need for engagement and determined the requirements and timing, contact the Community Engagement Advisor (CEA) to register it in the Engagement Register.

The CEA will also be able to help you determine whether an engagement plan is required, the level of planning needed and provide you with support throughout the process.

2. Develop the communications and engagement plan

Effective planning allows you to refine an approach and direction best able to achieve the goals of your project and engagement activity. It can also help you revisit your purpose if the project 'loses its way'.

Compiling the thoughts and information gained in the previous section will help you communicate how you intend to involve your stakeholders in influencing your project. You will then be able to create a step-by-step roadmap of responsibilities and tasks, and identify any supporting communications tools required.

Working through an engagement plan with members of other business units involved in or affected by your project will further strengthen the process and lead to better engagement outcomes. It can also help motivate teams and gain commitment to the engagement process.

Your engagement plan should set out:

- Scope, context and risk management
- Identification of statutory requirements or Council resolution
- Stakeholder identification and analysis
- Purpose for engaging and objectives
- The levels of engagement based on the influence stakeholders can have
- Engagement methods and communications tools
- Key messaging
- Schedule of activities
- Resources required
- Roles and responsibilities of the team
- Approvals protocols
- Evaluation measures.

It is important to remember that plans are fluid documents, which should be tailored according to the particular situation. Some projects will require a very detailed plan and others might only require a one-page brief.

The level of detail required for your engagement plan should be considered in terms of impact and potential risk to the City.

3. Approval of communications and engagement plan

Once the engagement plan has been developed, it must be approved at the appropriate level identified in your protocols.

4. Develop and organise resources

Prepare for the rollout of the engagement program by developing the identified communications materials and making the necessary arrangements for the feedback methods identified in your plan.

When using face-to-face methods such as meetings, forums or workshops, you should consider the following:

- Whether the venue is safe and appropriate
- Any health and safety issues
- Accessibility requirements for people with disability
- Providing information in alternative languages or formats
- Technology requirements and making sure all equipment is working
- Reducing manual data entry of participants' feedback by using Your Say Stirling at the event.

When creating written content for your communications pieces and collateral, it is vital that the messaging and text you develop is easy to understand (using basic English), consistent across all channels and appropriate for the identified audiences.

A picture says a thousand words, so remember the importance of including good quality, relevant and engaging images and other visual elements.

Your Marketing Officer can assist by sourcing stock or City-produced images that are consistent with the City's branding style.

While the project owner has overall responsibility for creating the content to be issued, all material must be proofed and approved by the Communications and Engagement team before it can be distributed externally.

It is often useful to develop content for the largest communications piece first, and then adapt the finalised content for use in other channels.



Implement and engage

This is where you put your engagement planning into practice and start to see the rewards of your hard work.

1. Promote participation in the engagement program

Raising awareness of the engagement program and encouraging participation is critical to its success.

It is important to allow enough time to promote your engagement, especially if there are any barriers to communication or the subject matter is complex.

When implementing the communications and marketing strategies identified in your engagement plan, don't be afraid to adjust them if they are not effective or having the desired results.

Remember to let the Customer Service Team know of your engagement activity and the supporting communications you are sending to stakeholders in the community.

You may consider providing a short briefing to them on the project, purpose for engaging and any key messages you would like them to use if they are contacted.

2. Deliver the engagement activities

Make sure to monitor the community engagement process and tweak the plan at any stage if you identify an area that needs improving.

Close off and evaluate

1. Collate and analyse the data

You will probably have a lot of information to sort through and consider once your engagement activity or program has concluded. Data can be collected online, on butchers paper, via handwritten notes or paper surveys.

It is important to collate and analyse this data effectively so you can concentrate on the resulting themes and conclusions and review them during the decision-making process.

Effective reporting relies on accurate documentation and management of feedback. This is critical to ensuring the engagement process is accountable and transparent.

Engagement activities using the Your Say Stirling online engagement hub will automatically store participant feedback and offers a variety of reporting functions.

Make sure you consider how you will meet all record keeping and privacy requirements when managing participant information. The Information Management team can provide further advice and assistance.

2. Report on the findings

Community and stakeholder engagement is carried out to help inform decision-making and often the activities result in the production of a document, plan, strategy or policy.

A report, brief or presentation will usually need to be prepared for your manager, Executive and/or Council and may be shared with participants as part of the feedback process.

Requirements and the reporting format will vary depending on the audience and purpose, but may include information such as:

- Stakeholder groups engaged
- Approach taken and methods and tools used, including how participation was promoted and supported
- Overall number of responses
- Weighting of responses
- Primary issues and concerns raised through the engagement program
- The City's response to the engagement outcomes
- Methods used to feedback to participants
- Evaluation of the engagement program.

Consider any business unit-specific requirements, such as the Planning Consultation Procedure, which outlines a reporting format that must be used for planning proposals.

3. Close the loop

Closing the loop and providing feedback to participants is one of the most important steps of the engagement process as it maintains the trust developed during the engagement program and ensures transparency of the process.

It is important to show participants how the engagement outcomes were collated, analysed and considered (along with other input and technical, financial or legislative requirements) as part of Council's decision-making process.

Sometimes feedback needs to be provided not only to participating stakeholders, but the whole community, depending on the issue.

Providing feedback is one way to build and maintain relationships with the community.

It is important to note that depending on the type of project or engagement being undertaken, providing feedback to participants or the community can take place at various stages during the engagement program. This helps to ensure that participants remain engaged during the process.

Council Resolution 0317/042 requires that all submitters of written submissions be advised in writing when the item comes to Council and Committee meetings for consideration.

In addition to the minimum feedback requirements set by Council, you should consider sending a brief thank you to participants a few days following the close of the engagement period and outline the next steps and dates, if known.

This could be followed up with more detailed feedback to participants within two to three weeks including:

- An update on the process
- Details on how their views were considered along with other input and technical, financial or legislative requirements
- A copy of the engagement outcomes report.

Don't forget to use the information tools available on your project's Your Say Stirling page to provide timely updates to your stakeholders.

4. Evaluate the process

Evaluation is an important part of the engagement process and supports continuous improvement of the City's community and stakeholder engagement practice.

Both formal methods of evaluation and the informal debrief sessions with colleagues involved in the process can provide valuable insight that can be used to learn what worked well, what didn't work so well and what can be done better next time.

Elements of the process to consider for your engagement evaluation could include:

- Timing
- Access issues
- Inclusiveness and reach of the process
- Facilitator's skills
- Expert's knowledge or presentation
- Clarity of information provided
- Effectiveness of communications tools in promoting the engagement
- Engagement methods selected
- Satisfaction of participants
- Final budget and value for money
- Lessons learnt.

Acknowledgements

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- AccountAbility
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- City of Joondalup
- City of Kalamunda
- City of Melbourne
- City of Melton
- City of Melville
- City of Mundaring
- City of Nedlands
- City of Perth
- City of South Perth
- City of Swan
- City of Wanneroo
- Glenorchy City Council
- International Association of Public Participation (IAP2)
- New Zealand Government
- Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD)
- South Australian Government's Better Together
- State Government of Victoria





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