

17 December 2018

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Deputy Secretary, Policy & Strategy
Department of Planning and Environment (DPE)
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SYDNEY NSW 2000

ON LINE LODGEMENT:

http://planspolicies.planning.nsw.gov.au/index.pl?action=view_job&job_id=9639

Dear Alison

COMMUNITY PARTICIPATION PLANS

Thank you for offering IAP2 Australasia the opportunity for comment and feedback on the DPE's Draft Community Participation Plan (CPP). We commend the Department on developing this CPP and appreciate the time and commitment you have dedicated to this CPP to set the standard of engagement.

IAP2 Australasia has reviewed DPE's CPP and would like to offer the following comments for your review.

About IAP2

The **International Association for Public Participation (IAP2)** is a global member organisation and an international leader in public participation, seeking to promote and improve the practice of public participation or community and stakeholder engagement.

IAP2 Australasia is the largest IAP2 affiliate with over 7,000 members, representing the breadth and depth of civil society; all tiers of government, small and large business across a range of sectors; tertiary institutions, and independent professional engagement specialists and trainers. Our mission is to advance the practice of community and stakeholder engagement through education, advocacy and building partnerships.

IAP2 has developed tools that are widely used and acknowledged. These include the Core Values, the Code of Ethics, the IAP2 Quality Assurance Standard for Community and Stakeholder Engagement and the IAP2 Public Participation Spectrum. *Please see Appendix 1: Best practice resources for engagement.*

DPE CPP Overview

IAP2 Australasia congratulates the Department of Planning and Environment in realising the importance of Community Participation and producing an easy-to-use resource guide for community members' voices to be heard, it is a great step in acknowledging engagement as a fundamental step in the Planning process.

Recommendations:

Alignment with the IAP2 Core Values: the IAP2 Core Values are widely accepted as informing best practice engagement. We commend DPE in highlighting some of the IAP2 Core Values within your CPP and recommend you that you further strengthen the alignment between them.

Consistent best practice: Further it is our recommendation that DPE's CPP should apply to other NSW and Local Government entities, as best practice should be applied to all Government entities in a consistent form. NSW State Government have the opportunity to be leaders in this space and co-ordinate Community Participation Plans across all State and Local government bodies.

We are advocating for the following legislative change: that engagement is embedded in legislation requiring 'how communities and stakeholders are to be included in government decision making processes'. This should also include the appointment of an Advisory Board to inform and guide the Ministers with representatives across the various layers of Government, Industry and key groups to ensure that Community Participation consistency is built across all Departments and LGA's in line with best practice principles.

Continued efforts are needed to build an enabling environment, building critical and strategic momentum to maximise the contribution of all stakeholders. Strengthening the institutional mechanisms for engagement will ensure transparency and inclusivity providing an opportunity for all voices to be heard, leaving no-one behind.

2.2 Our approach to Community Participation

The IAP2 Quality Assurance Standard for Community and Stakeholder Engagement and the IAP2 Code of Ethics, together with the IAP2 Public Participation Spectrum are useful resources to design an engagement strategy to improve Australia's performance around communities understanding of planning and how they can participate.

We note that there are elements of IAP2 Spectrum within the DPE CPP and recommend that Section 2.2 should be the starting point of your document and precede Section 1.

This would set the tone and nature of expected engagement as well as give the audience a better understanding of their potential level of participation. Tables 1 & 2 can then follow with clearer indications of the level of engagement that may be sought from the community & stakeholders particularly in Table 1, i.e. Inform, Consult and/or Engage should be specified and applied where

appropriate within three sections of the table to provide consistent language throughout the process. It is important to maintain transparency with the community and stakeholders to set a realistic expectation of the level of engagement and influence they may have in the process.

IAP2 Quality Assurance Standard for Community and Stakeholder Engagement (QAS)

In addition to the CPP plan, DPE can embed IAP2 QAS as a check and measure each time you engage with Community and Stakeholders.

To ensure the quality of stakeholder engagement as the International Standard for Public Participation practice, IAP2 endorsed the QAS in 2015. The QAS has been designed to respond to requirements for evidence that effective community and stakeholder engagement has been delivered and in particular that it accords with the professional communities' perspective of quality.

Table 1: What Functions does the Community Participation Plan apply to and Table 2: How the Community can participate in the Planning system

As indicated above, these tables need to be clearer in terms of where the public or stakeholders are able to participate and at what level. We also recommend that all DPE employees responsible for Community and Stakeholder participation follow IAP2 Code of Ethics and are appropriately trained in the Practice to equip them with the skills and capability of delivering DPE's CPP. The IAP2 Code of Ethics is a set of principles which guide the practitioners in their practice of enhancing the integrity of the public participation process. As Public Participation practitioners, they hold themselves accountable to these principles and strive to hold all participants to the same standards.

3.3 Feedback

The Department may wish to provide appropriate links to other websites to make it easier to find information for the services specified.

On-going Evaluation

IAP2 Australasia recommend on-going evaluation of Community Participation to encourage learning, improve the process and share knowledge within DPE as well as the broader practice.

The IAP2 Quality Assurance Standard for Community and Stakeholder Engagement provides an evaluation framework using the Core Values, with a number of indicators for each value and a measure for elementary, emerging and exemplary practice.

In closing

IAP2 Australasia would be available to work with DPE to assist with the successful implementation of their CPP and advocate to improve Australia's performance in the practice around communities understanding and involvement in DPE's CPP as well as other State & Local government engagement processes.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Lupina', written in a cursive style.

Chief Executive Officer, IAP2 Australasia

APPENDIX 1: IAP2 best practice resources for engagement

It should be noted that the terms public participation and community and/or stakeholder engagement are interchangeable in the context of these best practice resources.

Core values

As the principles upon which to define quality throughout the process of community and stakeholder engagement, IAP2 has developed the Core Values. The Core Values are commonly accepted as informing best practice engagement. The Core Values define the expectations and aspirations of the public participation process. Practitioners should adhere to these values for community engagement to be effective and of the highest quality. The extent to which the Core Values can be adhered to is impacted by the level of influence.

- 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.
- Public participation includes the promise that the public's contribution will influence the decision.
- Public participation promotes sustainable decisions by recognising and communicating the needs and interests of all participants, including decision makers.
- Public participation seeks out and facilitates the participation of those potentially affected by or interested in a decision.
- Public participation seeks input from participants in designing how they participate.
- Public participation provides participants with the information they need to participate in a meaningful way.
- Public participation communicates to participants how their input affected the decision.

Quality Assurance Standard for Community and Stakeholder Engagement

To ensure the quality of stakeholder engagement as the International Standard for Public Participation practice, IAP2 endorsed the Quality Assurance Standard in 2015. The Quality Assurance Standard has been designed to respond to requirements for evidence that effective community and stakeholder engagement has been delivered and in particular that it accords with the professional communities' perspective of quality.

The development and adoption of the Standard by professionals operating in this field, provides confidence and certainty for both practitioners and clients of community and stakeholder engagement practice.

The specific objectives of the Quality Assurance Standard are:

- To better assure the quality of engagement and engagement audit services
- To improve confidence and certainty in the process of community and stakeholder engagement both for users and clients of the engagement practice

- To regulate practitioner activity by standardising the process of community and stakeholder engagement
- To “authorise” practitioners to undertake community and stakeholder engagement in accordance with the agreed standard process.
- To support career, education and practice pathways so that professionalisation in community and stakeholder engagement can be encouraged.
- To validate engagement activity by defining and measuring (rating) a quality public participation process.

Code of Ethics

The IAP2 Code of Ethics as is a set of principles which guide the practitioners in their practice of enhancing the integrity of the public participation process.

As Public Participation practitioners, they hold themselves accountable to these principles and strive to hold all participants to the same standards.

1. Purpose: to support public participation as a process to make better decisions that incorporate the interests and concerns of all affected stakeholders and meet the needs of the decision-making body.
2. Role of Practitioner: will enhance the public’s participation in the decision-making process and assist decision-makers in being responsive to the public’s concerns and suggestions.
3. Trust: will undertake and encourage actions that build trust and credibility for the process and among all the participants.
4. Defining the Public’s Role: we will carefully consider and accurately portray the public’s role in the decision-making process.
5. Openness: will encourage the disclosure of all information relevant to the public’s understanding and evaluation of a decision.
6. Access to the Process: we will ensure that stakeholders have fair and equal access to the public participation process and the opportunity to influence decisions.
7. Respect for Communities: we will avoid strategies that risk polarizing community interest or that appear to ‘divide and conquer’.
8. Advocacy: we will advocate for the public participation process and will not advocate for a particular interest, party or project outcome.
9. Commitments: we will ensure that all commitments made to the public, including those by the decision-maker, are made in good faith.
10. Support of the Practice: we will mentor new practitioners in the field and educate decision makers and the public about the value and use of public participation.


IAP2 Public Participation Spectrum

Supports groups to define the public's role in any public participation process.

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 				
		INFORM	CONSULT	INVOLVE	COLLABORATE	EMPOWER
PUBLIC PARTICIPATION GOAL		To provide the public with balanced and objective information to assist them in understanding the problem, alternatives, opportunities and/or solutions.	To obtain public feedback on analysis, alternatives and/or decisions.	To work directly with the public throughout the process to ensure that public concerns and aspirations are consistently understood and considered.	To partner with the public in each aspect of the decision including the development of alternatives and the identification of the preferred solution.	To place final decision making in the hands of the public.
	PROMISE TO THE PUBLIC	We will keep you informed.	We will keep you informed, listen to and acknowledge concerns and aspirations, and provide feedback on how public input influenced the decision.	We will work with you to ensure that your concerns and aspirations are directly reflected in the alternatives developed and provide feedback on how public input influenced the decision.	We will look to you for advice and innovation in formulating solutions and incorporate your advice and recommendations into the decisions to the maximum extent possible.	We will implement what you decide.