



IAP2 Annual Conference

20th October 2016



At the IAP2 annual conference over 80 participants took some time to work together to identify our collective learnings and insights from the previous 3 days together. This report is a summary of the thoughts that emerged from the group.

Practice

Deliberative practice is great to strive for but it is not possible or practical in every case. Instead of holding "empowerment" as the utopian destination, we should aim for authentic engagement - appropriate, well considered and recognising where value can be added and influenced by the community through genuine and honest processes.

Aim to be tool driven.

Valuing work at all levels of the spectrum.

Plan - embed engagement - validate. Evaluate feedback.

What is the difference between participation and engagement? Are we just getting people to share their views or are we genuinely working towards shared decision making?

Deliberative processes have to be purposeful with a real opportunity for the community to influence the decision.

The diversity of engagement practices represents the whole tool kit, not using one in isolation. Open data = the new black!

Australia is ready for deliberative processes beyond citizens juries.

Local wisdom on deliberative process. Wisdom, information.

Best practice you can do rather than "best practice". Fit for purpose. Card storming - citizen jury.

It doesn't matter if it's new / trendy, it needs to be appropriate practice.

Importance of authenticity. Sharing learning from good and bad.

Become pro-active in seeking out new tools and practices - especially to make evaluation better.

Focus on long term process.

Go where the people are! Whatever we do needs to be fit for the purpose.

Licence to be creative in your engagement (place making).

There needs to be case studies on how open data has been used to solve problems - or can be used, and to be related to community engagement.

Power

Broken system e.g. populism, powerful media; ways to interrupt populism or harness populist energy.

Orbit of influence.

As CE practitioners we need to be careful to select processes that are suitable for the outcome required (and not just follow fashions).

Transference from public space to empowered space.

Need organisation leadership and a culture that focuses on the importance of community consultation lead from the top - advocacy and support.

Embed KPI's into performance reviews for key decision makers within organisations i.e. CEOs, executives.

We need to believe in the expertise of communities as much as they need to believe in ours to build trust.

Communities can make good decisions.

Sharing power builds influence, credibility and authenticity.

Trust of decision makers - trial / explore / pilot - low risk, feedback, engagement process. Who are the decision makers and why?

More community, less governance in decision making i.e. SA fund my community.

Leaner times (less money) will drive our practice and from sectors outside engagement, community development, communications.

That we should not overvalue empowerment to the detriment of valuing information and consultation.

Build engagement into internal systems.

Importance of political leadership and will. Promoting outcomes of shared ownership.

Engagement that in ongoing and meaningful public participation, not just one-off token consultation (if appropriate / relevant / possible).

Power to the people - PB, citizens' juries.

If it's driven from the top there is more success! Leadership is important! Power of community and government - collaboration.

People

Need to grow and support our engagement leaders, both in our professions and community.

The Cumberland council model!

Inclusive - "the unheard" e.g. mum, single parents, married, no voice. Take it to the people. Enable. Take the time to plan - start early.

Transparency of process. Clarity of scope of engagement.

Engagement should be from top down and bottom up. Greater awareness of what engagement is will create better processes and implementation.

Understanding and building awareness of engagement in organisations will lead to better outcomes.

Consider at every level: are we engaging the right people? Who's missing? What do they need to be able to participate?

About the broad inclusion of all people in decisions. How it's possible, even beyond citizens juries i.e. PB.

For future conferences please can we have table talks up early!

This is best practice and it's worth fighting the fight for.

It's about the small wins - community, colleagues.

Community of practitioners - strength in numbers!

Connecting existing groups within their space. Diversity of inclusion.

How can IAP2 reach people involved in engagement so they can participate in conferences training? Those who don't have resources / organisations behind them - sponsorship? Scholarship?

We need to build trust, ongoing relationships and deliberative literacy.

Demonstrate better value delivered through participation.

Start early. Be courageous.

Build capacity of community to engage, no longer go to representative / sectors but seek representative participation, build / develop trust in ongoing relationships between community and organisation.

Collaboration between different levels of government (local / state / federal).

Peer review projects - builds credibility.

Share information (evidence approach).

Shift needed from "what can you do for me" - adult partnerships, not parent / child.



PLEASE NOTE:

While every effort has been made to transcribe participants comments accurately a small number have not been included in this summary due to the legibility of the content. Please contact Keith Greaves at Keith@mosaiclab.com.au for any suggested additions.