Guideline for effective stakeholder engagement

Planning for settlements exposed to natural hazard and climate change risks

VICTORIA
State
Government

Environment,
Land, Water
and Planning

Photo credit

Visit Victoria | Rob Blackburn

Acknowledgment

We acknowledge and respect Victorian Traditional Owners as the original custodians of Victoria's land and waters, their unique ability to care for Country and deep spiritual connection to it. We honour Elders past and present whose knowledge and wisdom has ensured the continuation of culture and traditional practices.

We are committed to genuinely partner, and meaningfully engage, with Victoria's Traditional Owners and Aboriginal communities to support the protection of Country, the maintenance of spiritual and cultural practices and their broader aspirations in the 21st century and beyond.

Preface

The Guideline for effective stakeholder engagement (Guideline) is an initiative under *Plan Melbourne 2017-2050* Direction 6.2 to 'reduce the likelihood and consequences of natural hazard events and adapt to climate change'. It delivers on Action 86 of the Plan Melbourne 2017-2050 Five Year Implementation Plan as a strategic response to strengthen 'whole-of-settlement adaption and risk mitigation strategies'.

The Guideline has been developed by the Planning Group, Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning (DELWP) for strategic land use planners and has been informed by a consultation process. It builds on research and analysis into current stakeholder engagement practice undertaken as part of the strategic planning of settlements exposed to natural hazard and climate change risks.
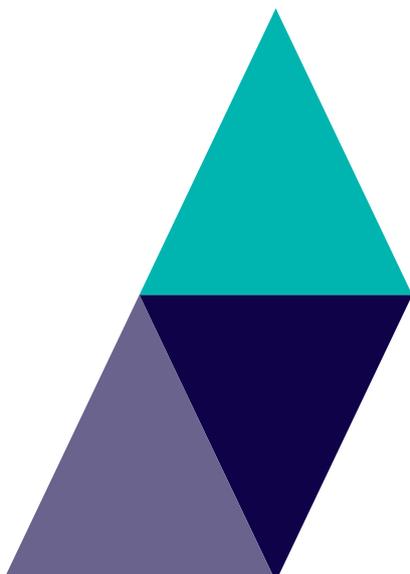
Engaging stakeholders, including communities is an important part of settlement planning when deciding locations for new settlements and urban growth, particularly where there is exposure to natural hazard and climate change risks. This includes considering the impact of settlement planning on natural hazards. It is a Victorian regulatory requirement for local and state governments when undertaking planning scheme amendments and should involve stakeholders across a range of agencies and organisations, business and industry representatives and community members.

The Guideline provides a resource for how to undertake, and achieve effective engagement outcomes, including when required by regulation. Effective engagement provides opportunities for stakeholders to inform key stages and decisions in the strategic settlement planning process, build local capacity and knowledge and establish a shared resilience vision for communities.

Contents

Definitions

Collaboration	The process of working together to solve a problem.
Communication	Imparting or exchanging information or ideas, utilising a range of channels and mediums.
Community	A group of people who live in the same geographical area or have a shared background, interest, affiliation or membership.
Consultation	Seeking feedback or advice on a select topic or project.
Engagement	A process to strengthen relationships, increase local knowledge and inform decision-making.
Hazard	A source of potential harm or a situation with a potential to cause loss.
Inclusion	The practices that allow all people to feel valued and respected. This is irrespective of age, disability, gender, religion, sexual preference or nationality. This is evident when anyone who wishes to can fully participate. This means they can access, understand, and contribute their perspectives and talents to the engagement.
Partnership	Two or more people or organisations working in a formalised relationship with a clear sense of purpose. Accountabilities and responsibilities are shared.
Process	A relationship between key steps, activities, tasks, policies and/or resources.
Public	Individuals who live, work, visit or have an interest in a defined place.
Risk	The likelihood and consequence of a hazard, including the impacts on people, property and the environment.
Stakeholders	Individuals or organisations, which affect, or can be affected by project decisions. Organisations can include not-for-profit and community-based groups, business and industry, and volunteer networks. They may also include other departments or agencies across federal, state and local government.

1. Introduction

1.1 Purpose

The Guideline will assist strategic land use planners to engage with stakeholders, including communities, when undertaking settlement planning. It supports active stakeholder involvement in the early stages, and throughout the settlement planning process to help communities understand and respond to natural hazards that may affect them. Reference made to natural hazards throughout the document means the risks they pose and their impacts exacerbated by climate change.

The objectives of the Guideline are:

- Set out a proactive engagement process to support settlement planning using a principles-based approach.

- Provide tools to undertake detailed stakeholder analysis to support engagement and build local knowledge.

- Describe the stakeholder engagement process, including who, when and how to engage.

- Describe how the Guideline relates to other relevant planning engagement and consultation processes, government policies and the Victorian planning system.

- Provide information and examples about how to engage communities on the impacts of natural hazard risks.

- Engage with Traditional Owner groups throughout the settlement planning process.

- Demonstrate how local insights and technical knowledge and information can strengthen the planning process for settlement planning.

1.2 Why do we need the Guideline?

The Victorian Government's policy is to achieve safer and more resilient communities. Encouraging input on settlement planning from a wide range of stakeholders, and being inclusive, will lead to improved preparation for, and response to natural hazard risks affecting where communities live and work.

Research tells us that either a 'people' or 'risk' focused direction is usually taken when engaging stakeholders on natural hazards. In Victoria, planners generally apply a 'risk' focus to engagement.

The engagement approach for this Guideline supports the integration of a 'people' and 'risk' focus, to ensure the inclusion of views from a wide range of stakeholders.

1.3 When to use the Guideline?

The Guideline should be used at any stakeholder engagement stage of a settlement planning project, including when undertaking engagement and consultation for planning scheme amendments to meet the requirements under the *Planning and Environment Act 1987* (the Act).

The Guideline applies when preparing strategic planning documents, such as regional growth plans, local settlement plans, including structure plans and precinct structure plans, and planning scheme reviews involving areas of natural hazards.

The engagement approach can be adapted to suit a project's specific need, recognising that each project is different in the context of engaging the community. It can also be informed by relevant state-endorsed natural hazard and climate change adaptation guidance.
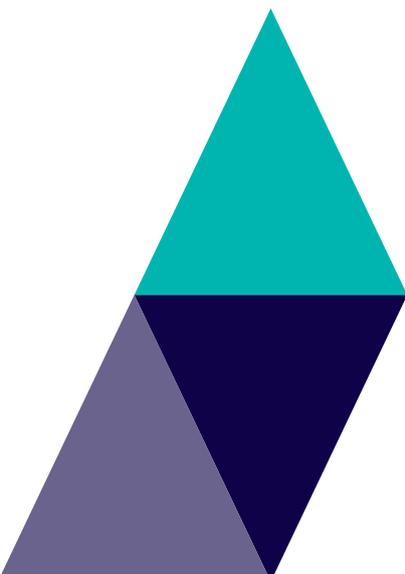
1.4 What are the natural hazards?

The Guideline only addresses engagement on natural hazards. Climate change will have a significant impact on the way natural hazards are managed in future as it exacerbates the impacts of events.

Natural hazards are a source of potential harm or a situation with a potential to cause loss. Not all natural hazards are relevant to settlement planning in Victoria. Natural hazards can include:

Bushfire

A fire, occurring in bushland and grassland hazards, but which can also consume houses or agricultural resources.

Coastal

A coastal hazard can include erosion and inundation.

Drought

A prolonged period of abnormally low rainfall, leading to a shortage of water.

Flood

A flood occurs when water inundates land which is usually dry. Flood includes stormwater and rivers.

Heatwave

A period of uncharacteristically hot weather, generally lasting several days.

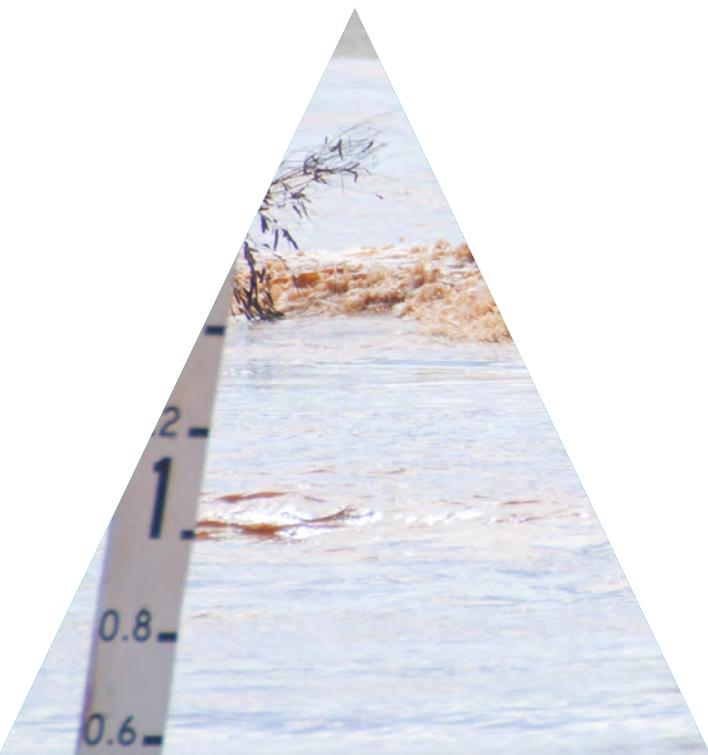### Landslide

The movement of mass earth materials down a slope.

Severe Storm

Includes:

- windstorms
- dust storms
- blizzards
- storm tides
- severe thunderstorms (including hailstorms, tornadoes and heavy rain).

2. Role of the Guideline

Existing engagement requirements

The Guideline is not prescriptive. It is not a substitute for the engagement and consultation undertaken by a planning authority to meet the requirements under the Act for a planning scheme amendment. It assists a planning authority to enhance engagement associated with this process.

The Guideline should be used to inform broader engagement beyond those processes associated with the Act. Section 7 outlines when extra attention should be given to engagement practice.

Figure 1 below summarises the mandatory or discretionary stages of engagement and consultation for a relevant planning scheme amendment.

Figure 1: Summary of stakeholder engagement on planning scheme amendments

Stage of amendment	Engagement process	Engagement requirement
1. Requesting an amendment	Requests: • by individuals - discuss with relevant council • by councils - discuss with relevant DELWP regional office • within an area planned by Victorian Planning Authority (VPA) discuss with the VPA.	Discretionary
2. Authorisation	Not applicable	
3. Preparation for Exhibition	Strategic planners may undertake engagement with stakeholders or the community to inform the proposal. Note: bushfire must be addressed in amendment documentation and include the views of the relevant fire authority.	Discretionary
4. Exhibition	Section 19 of Act requires the listed stakeholders: • are notified of the proposed amendment • have access to view relevant documentation • can make a submission about a proposal. Note: Planning authorities and the Minister for Planning may be exempt from the Act requirements.	Mandatory
5. Submissions, panel and advisory committees	Submissions made to the planning authority if notice has been given. Request for advisory committee (by anyone other than Minister for Planning). Amendment referred to panel if planning authority does not accept submissions seeking to change amendment. Submitters can present at a panel hearing.	Mandatory/ Discretionary
6. Adoption	Adoption of amendment by resolution of the planning authority.	Mandatory
7. Approval	Minister for Planning can require further consultation/consideration on amendment.	Discretionary

3. Engagement approach

There is a range of Victorian and national government policies and frameworks to address the resilience of communities.

Figure 2 lists those reviewed, providing an overview of current policies and standard practices when engaging stakeholders in settlement planning. They emphasise the importance of engaging stakeholders while responding to natural hazards.

Although aligned in the need for engaging stakeholders, overall approaches show different focus areas of engagement: either a 'people' or 'risk' focus. Having a focus in one area does not mean the other area is disregarded or is less important. For example, a policy might have a risk focus, but within this priority, people still play a large role.

The 'risk-focused' approach uses engagement with stakeholders to identify, analyse, evaluate and mitigate risk. Based on feedback from natural resource managers and emergency services, the engagement practice of strategic planners lends itself more towards a 'risk-focused' approach to considering how natural hazards impact settlement planning. This is likely influenced by planning policies that advocate a risk-based approach to planning, then determining the engagement approach to meet statutory requirements.

The 'people-focused' approach recognises that for communities and their settlements to be resilient and safe, communities need to be at the centre of decision making and participate in prevention and mitigation approaches. Policies and frameworks with this focus consider engagement essential for the development of resilient and safe communities. For settlement planning this means engaging with stakeholders early in the settlement planning process to create a tailored response.

Interviews with planners found that when strategic planners engage outside of the Act requirements for planning scheme amendments, engagement generally had a 'people' focus that set different expectations for engagement.

The Guideline supports both a 'people' and 'risk' approach. It equips strategic planners with tools to consider the integration of 'people' as well as 'risk' in their engagement approach through connection and collaboration.

Figure 2: Engagement focus of the policies and frameworks reviewed

Focus	Policies and Framework
PEOPLE	**Focus area:** Documents put stakeholders at the centre. Key themes include empowering, connection, collaboration, acting as one, building knowledge, and working better together. **Policies and Frameworks:** Emergency Management Victoria 2017, Community Resilience Framework for Emergency Management 2017, State of Victoria Emergency Management Victoria 2019, Victorian Emergency Management Strategic Action Plan Update #4 2019–2022, State of Victoria Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning 2018, DELWP Community Charter , State of Victoria Department of Premier and Cabinet, Public Engagement Framework 2021, State of Victoria Victorian Auditor-General's Office 2015, Public Participation in Government Decision-making: Better practice guide
RISK	**Focus area:** Documents have a risk mitigation focus. In these examples, different stakeholders are involved at key points in the decision-making process to identify, analyse, evaluate and treat risks. **Policies and Frameworks:** Australian Standard AS5334:2013, Climate change adaptation for settlements and infrastructure – A risk-based approach, Standards Australia Victoria State Government 2015, Safer Together: A new approach to reducing the risk of bushfire in Victoria , State of Victoria Victoria State Government 2016, Victoria's Climate Change Adaptation Plan 2017–2020, State of Victoria

4. Engagement principles

There are eight engagement principles that provide a basic reference to good stakeholder engagement.

If each of the principles can be considered in the design and delivery of the engagement, planners should be confident a quality outcome will be achieved.

These principles should always be applied in ways that suit your engagement. They acknowledge that each engagement has a different purpose, and each community will have different external influences.

The eight principles listed in Figure 3 include the intended approach to deliver on the principles.

Figure 3: Engagement principles

PRINCIPLE	APPROACH
We work with Victorian Traditional Owner groups from the outset	• Make contact and invite engagement with the Traditional Owner groups at the earliest stage of the project. • Ask if and how they wish to be engaged and their required timeframes. • Should a request to participate be accepted, build clear communication channels and pursue regular dialogue.
We have a clear engagement purpose	• Identify and communicate the purpose of the engagement, including negotiable and non-negotiable elements. • Communicate how information will be considered during the decision-making process.
We identify stakeholders who are impacted and/or interested	• Identify all stakeholders by undertaking a stakeholder analysis. • Understand their interests in the project.
We use a range of different tools and techniques	• Ask stakeholders how they would like to be engaged, understand their capacity to be involved, and how they can be accommodated. • Use a range of complementary and tailored engagement approaches including conventional and online activities.
We provide information to build community capacity and knowledge	• Provide the community with information about settlement planning, relevant natural hazards, and climate change. • Respond to any community questions or concerns during the planning process.
We strengthen stakeholder and engagement processes ensuring information is considered in decision making	• Respect existing engagement processes by providing approaches that can be integrated with those already established.
We are respectful, fair and equitable towards all stakeholders	• Provide a variety of opportunities for stakeholders to openly express their views and opinions, including vulnerable groups and Traditional Owner groups. • Recognise that stakeholders may have conflicting issues and provide space for open discussion. • Provide flexible opportunities for stakeholders to participate. • Check-in with your own feelings and potential biases towards stakeholders.
We provide feedback on process outcomes and how decisions were made	• Publish updates and final outcomes of engagement using relevant forms of communication.

5. Why engage?

Stakeholder engagement is important in the development of all strategic planning processes.

The purpose and style of engagement depends on a range of factors including, the objectives, locations, stakeholders involved, and the time available.

There are two key reasons to undertake engagement with stakeholders when settlements are exposed to natural hazards:

1. Building community understanding, adaptability and resilience

Engagement with stakeholders can lead to a deeper understanding of unique and diverse communities, including their needs, strengths, and vulnerabilities.

Engagement creates stronger and more trusting relationships. It provides people with information to build their own understanding of the social, economic and environmental costs and to consider the consequences of adaptation, mitigation or retreat, and even maladaptation.

Stakeholder engagement through a settlement planning project strengthens local networks and enables planners to understand the roles people play in a community. It also enables individuals and groups to understand their role in planning settlements while accounting for natural hazards.

2. Building technical understanding in identifying and mitigating risks

Stakeholder engagement provides an opportunity for planners, project partners, and the community to share knowledge, expertise, and better identify the risks associated with natural hazards.

By bringing a range of stakeholders into the engagement process a comprehensive view of risks will be obtained from a range of perspectives. It may identify:

- potential policy conflicts

- appropriate mitigation measures (short, medium and long-term)

- the capacity to adapt from different perspectives, such as community resilience, strategic planning and built form

- potential maladaptation

- that no mitigation measures are possible.

Risks should also be considered in the context of community values. Broad engagement helps planners to better understand the values of the built and natural environments that communities would like to see preserved and protected.

Often the identification of risks is iterative, occurring at multiple points in the planning process.

6. Who to engage?

A stakeholder is any person or organisation that can affect, be affected by, or perceive themselves to be affected by a decision or activity.

Engagement should include representatives from diverse sectors, including local communities, Traditional Owner groups, government, agencies, experts, business and industry. Seeking out participation from each of these cohorts will enable a vast range of experiences, impacts and interests to be identified and understood.

Engagement must prioritise the sharing of information and collaboration between stakeholder groups. Importantly, consider whether there is diversity in a project stakeholder list, and if stakeholders will face barriers that limit or block their ability to participate, and how these can be overcome. Think through other participation constraints, such as resources, to help determine how stakeholders can be engaged.

Figure 4, is an indicative example of key stakeholders, arranged by level of interest and influence. A similar approach should be taken to define the unique stakeholders of each project.

The Appendix to this document provides a stakeholder resource list, describing each stakeholder's role, likely interest in the settlement planning process, and potential level of involvement in the decision-making process.

Figure 4: Example of stakeholders by level of influence.

Note: The list is non-exhaustive and does not replicate all stakeholders in the Appendix.

LEVEL OF INFLUENCE			
Inform Provide factual information	**Consult** Seek feedback or advice	**Involve** Provide a two-way exchange of information	**Collaborate** Work together to solve a problem
Metropolitan Waste and Resource Recovery Group Parks Victoria Victoria Police	Ambulance Victoria Department of Education and Training Environment Protection Authority Industry 'peak body groups' Research Organisations Life Saving Victoria	Community groups, Friends of groups, Progress Associations (etc) Department of Transport Land Development and Subdivision Industry Landowners and occupiers Municipal Fire Prevention Officers Utility Providers	Country Fire Authority Fire Rescue Victoria Floodplain Management Authorities (Catchment Management Authorities/Melbourne Water) Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning Emergency Management Committees – state, regional and municipal Local Government Registered Aboriginal Parties Traditional Owner groups Victorian Planning Authority

7. When to engage?

Engagement on strategic settlement planning needs to start early, and continue throughout the planning, implementation, and evaluation stages.

Figure 5 outlines an indicative approach on when to engage, including when it is required under the Act for planning scheme amendments. It includes broad stages of engagement from background planning to the evaluation of the planning process. It also lists examples of key stakeholders to engage with and potential questions.

Figure 5: Engagement approach

Settlement planning stages and purpose	Engagement requirements under the Act	Example stakeholders	Example questions\ Examples only, not in order of priority, nor an exhaustive list and only relate to natural hazards.
Stage 1 Background and existing conditions • Gather baseline information relevant to the site or locality	N/A	Traditional Owner groups, Registered Aboriginal Parties, relevant fire authority, DELWP, committees of management, FMA/CMA, Local Government, Victoria Police, VICSES, VPA, affected landowners and occupiers.	• What is your knowledge of the site? • What do you consider to be the key planning considerations relating to natural hazards and climate change? • Has the site been subject to any specific land management techniques to manage natural hazards and the impacts of climate change? • Have there been any natural hazard events that caused major impacts on the settlement or surrounding area in the past? • What were the main effects that you know of? • Are you aware of any changes or lessons learned following these events? • What are the likely future changes to risk?

| **Stage 2**

Visioning, issues and opportunities

• Identify and analyse issues and opportunities

• Develop a statement, concepts or principles to guide plan.

• Develop options or scenarios.

• Engage with stakeholders to develop vision, identify issues, opportunities, and options for testing/ investigation. | N/A | Traditional Owner groups, Registered Aboriginal Parties, broader community (Community group, Friends of groups, Progress Associations), relevant fire authority, FMA/CMA, DELWP, Local Government, Victoria Police, VICSES, VPA, affected landowners and occupiers. | • How can the effects of natural hazards and climate change be better managed or reduced on the site?

• What are the opportunities and constraints for this proposal?

• What are the risks that need to be managed?

• Have hazards been identified and mapped?

• Has risk been analysed?

• How do you think future hazards may change development?

• How do you think future development may change hazards – potential maladaptation?

• Have areas most likely to be affected by a changing climate been identified?

• Are there particular vulnerabilities in the region that affect the capacity to respond to hazard events (for example, age profile, resource)?

• What are the key timescales and priorities for addressing specific threats?

• Have emerging options been tested against different climatic scenarios and other circumstances (such as change in local population, less resources, two successive events, for example pandemic and then a fire)? |
| **Stage 3**

Draft Plan

• Develop a draft plan/ strategy

• Undertake engagement on draft plan

• Present updated draft to panel or advisory committee. | Post authorisation, exhibit amendment unless exemption applies.

Referral of submissions/consideration of amendment to a panel or Advisory Committee.

Consideration of panel / Advisory Committee recommendation report. | Traditional Owner groups, Registered Aboriginal Parties, affected landowners and occupiers, broader community (Community group, Friends of groups, Progress Associations), relevant fire authority, FMA/ CMA, DELWP, Local Government, Victoria Police, utility providers, VSES, VPA. | • Does the plan adequately address relevant policy, strategy and guidance regarding the natural hazards?

• Is the information on natural hazards clear and concise?

• Does any of the language or content relating to natural hazards need to be changed or strengthened?

• Do you have any other feedback on the draft plan and how it responds to the risk of natural hazards?

• Is any critical information to assist with developing the plan not available? If so, what approach is in place to resolve this shortfall. |

Stage 4 Approval of Final Plan • Council resolution to apply for approval. • Minister decides • Decision gazetted.	Adoption and approval of amend-ment	Engagement with key stakeholders involved in process.	• Communicate approved changes.
Stage 5: Evaluate • Evaluate the plan/strategy and engagement process.	N/A	Engagement with key stakeholders involved in process.	• Could the plan and engagement process have been done differently? • Can you identify opportunities to improve future processes?
Stage 6 (out of scope) Implement and evaluate plan • Implement the plan/strategy • Evaluate the settlement planning process	N/A	Engagement with key stakeholders involved in process.	• Create and implement separate communications and engagement plan.

8. How to engage?

This section outlines how to design a stakeholder engagement process based on leading practice engagement approaches.

Follow the steps below to ensure the engagement program is strategic, purposeful and accessible. The steps should be aligned with the engagement principles in Section 4.

Step 1: Define your purpose

A purpose is a broad statement that defines what you plan to do during and after the engagement. It is important to start the engagement process by defining its scope and purpose, and to communicate the parameters of the engagement broadly and clearly.

Tips for defining the purpose include:

- Use the right language. The term 'engagement' can have different meanings or definitions depending on an organisation's sector, resources, intent and stakeholders and communities involved.

- Use engagement tools such as the IAP2 Public Participation Spectrum to help define your purpose.

- Speak to people with diverse experiences and interests in the project to ensure the purpose meets the needs of all internal stakeholders.

- Research similar engagement programs and contact those involved to hear their reflections and lessons learnt.

Step 2: Design your objectives

At the beginning of any engagement the objectives should be clearly defined so stakeholders understand the process and intended outcomes.

Objectives also need to be commonly understood and 'owned' by the broader project team. They should be carefully worded to accurately represent the project purpose and to avoid any misunderstanding. This will also allow for effective monitoring and evaluation of the project.

Tips for designing objectives include:

- Keep them meaningful and succinct.

- Use accessible and appropriate language.

- Present the objectives in a logical order.

- Develop both process and content objectives; process being the how, content being the what.

Step 3: Identify the negotiables and non-negotiables

It is important to identify the negotiable and non-negotiable elements of the project.

By identifying and understanding what is negotiable, it is possible to:

- Clearly communicate and provide information about what decisions have already been made.

- Identify and communicate what is outside your sphere of influence or project scope.

- Clarify the areas that the decision-makers are seeking to engage with stakeholders and the community.

- Be honest with stakeholders and the community about what outcomes will and will not be possible as a result of the engagement and the project.

Clearly defined and communicated non-negotiable elements avoid unrealistic expectations and minimise the risk of conflict or confusion.

Tips for identifying negotiables and non-negotiables include:

- Include all relevant project team members and partners in the conversation.

- Try to list as many negotiables and non-negotiables as you can.

- Consider each phase or stage and consider all streams of work being completed.

- Think of additional elements which could be negotiated to complement the project, such as creating events or establishing reference groups or programs.

Step 4: Understand the stakeholders

Determining who should participate in the engagement is a key stage in planning for engagement as outlined in Section 6.

Each engagement project involves different groups of people with varied ideas about the issue. It is very important to identify the people or groups who are affected by or have influence on the project, and to understand their level of interest in the project, their motivations, and their ability to participate in the engagement process.

Develop a comprehensive list and deep understanding of the relevant stakeholders by following these steps:

1. Research your stakeholders

- Learn about public perception of the project.

- Consider past experiences and previous engagement with stakeholders concerning similar issues.

2. Identify your stakeholders

- Create a list of key stakeholders and stakeholder groups. Work with a cross section of staff within your organisation to identify all potential stakeholders.

- Reach out to other organisations and community members.

- Consider advertising in local papers and other media.

3. Prioritise your stakeholders

- Create a list that identifies the stakeholders most likely to be highly affected by the outcomes of your project.

- Identify who might find it harder to participate in the engagement process.

4. Understand your stakeholders

- What are the stakeholder perceptions of the project?

- How much influence do stakeholders have?

- What things are important to them?

- How have they participated in the past?

- What is their willingness to change?

- What are their barriers to engagement?

- How can we prepare for their participation?

Step 5: Select the tools and techniques

There are endless tools and techniques that can be used for your engagement. Depending on the purpose and the stakeholders, some will be more suitable than others.

Common engagement tools include workshops, small group discussions, briefings, interviews and surveys. It is important to combine a range of tools and techniques that enable, and support, diverse stakeholders to participate.

Questions to consider when selecting the best tools for the engagement are:

- What are the engagement questions and what is the best technique to present them to the community?

- What resources are available to you to support the engagement?

- What is realistic within the timeframe of the engagement?

- Are you hoping to engage a breadth of stakeholders and community members, or go in-depth with a small group?

- What are the stakeholder and community barriers to engagement and how can they be overcome?

- Which engagement techniques have been successful in the past with the stakeholders and community in question?

- Which tools and techniques will assist in achieving the objectives of the engagement?

- How will you ensure the engagement is inclusive and accessible to everyone?

- Is there a mix of online and face-to-face engagement?

Step 6: Manage the engagement data

Capturing the engagement effectively is very important. For example, capturing the knowledge, thoughts and opinions drawn out by the engagement process. This information will be used to influence future decisions, and for public reporting purposes.

The methods used to capture this information are likely to be different for each project and could include formal minutes of a meeting, a facilitator's notes from a workshop, or a recorded interview.

Tips for planning to capture engagement data include:

- Consider the data to be captured and whether it will be qualitative and/or quantitative.

- Do not alter your engagement materials or questions once the process has started. This can be misleading and will affect the validity of your data.

- Prepare a template sign-in sheet for workshops or meetings to capture details of participants and brief team members to assist participants to sign in correctly.

- Explain to participants how their details and information will be used during the engagement. This can make some participants feel more comfortable in sharing their thoughts and opinions.

- Seek permission from participants to record or film discussions.

Step 7: Provide feedback

You need to plan what you are going to report, which feedback you are likely to share, and how this will be communicated.

'Closing the loop' refers to any process which feeds back the engagement findings or outcomes to the participants. This process is important because:

- Participants can see how their feedback was used, instilling trust in your process.

- Provides transparent implementation of actions with a widely understood evidence base.

- Maintains relationships for future engagement.

- Provides a plan for how the feedback process will happen.

Tips for planning feedback include:

- Set up a centralised database, ready to store participants' details from the beginning.

- Ask participants during the engagement for their preferred method of receiving feedback.

- Thank participants via telephone or email at appropriate moments, even if their participation was minimal.

- Plan how and when findings will be published online, and how interested participants will be notified.

- Prepare to issue newsfeeds for participants by communicating information on the progress of the project. This is important, even if there is little to report.

- Devise a method to keep track of who has received what information to avoid spamming people or overlooking some participants.
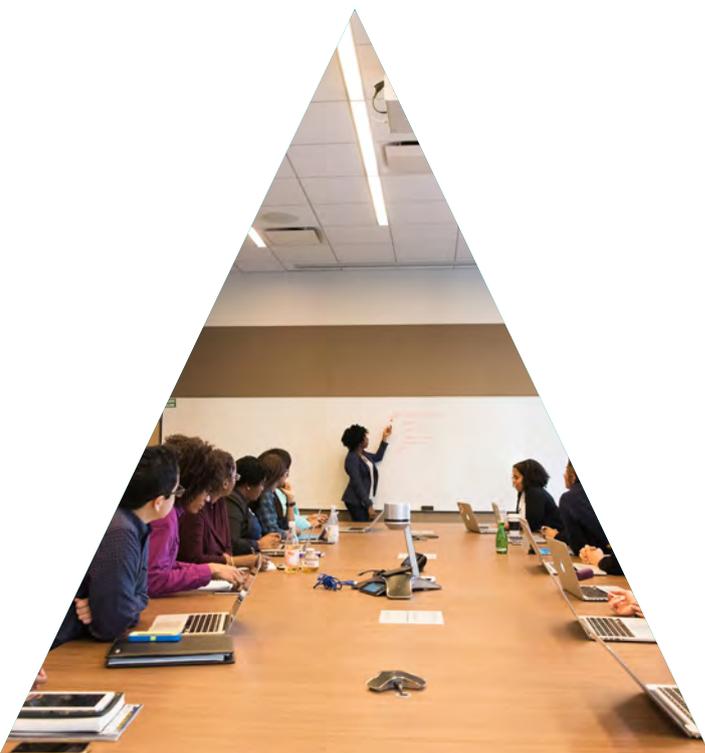
Appendix

Stakeholder resource list

Note: It is a non-exhaustive list. The level of interest and influence for each stakeholder should be determined by the project working group for a project – refer to Sections 6 and 8.

Stakeholder *refer note above	Description of purpose and likely interest in planning process	Level of interest *refer note above	Level of influence *refer note above
COMMUNITY STAKEHOLDERS			
Traditional Owner groups	Purpose: Aboriginal people who have traditional connection to an identified geographical area of Country. Interest: Impacts to their Country, cultural practices and other traditional owner values. Impacts on existing planning processes where they have responsibilities, including cultural heritage management plans.	High	High
Registered Aboriginal Parties (RAP)	Purpose: Traditional Owner groups that are legally recognised under the *Aboriginal Heritage Act 2006*, with responsibilities for managing and protecting Aboriginal Cultural Heritage on Country within the RAP area. Interest: Impacts to Cultural Heritage sites, rights and interests including through legislation, policy, land management and zoning, settlement. Registered Aboriginal Parties can be found at. https://www.firstpeoplesrelations.vic.gov.au/	High	High
Landowners and occupiers	Purpose: Landowners may be private or commercial, and property use may be residential, commercial or industrial. The landowner may or may not be a resident or commercial user of a property. This group will be particularly diverse, including those more socio-economically vulnerable. Interest: Property values, development opportunities/restrictions, population growth, land management and zoning, environmental management, infrastructure, risk and emergency management, education and employment.	High	Low

Stakeholder *refer note above	Description of purpose and likely interest in planning process	Level of interest *refer note above	Level of influence *refer note above
Community groups, Friends of groups, Progress Associations (etc)	Purpose: Provide a wide range of services and support in their local communities. Their impact may be through hands on action or advocacy. Interest: Population growth, land management and zoning, environmental management, infrastructure, property values, risk and emergency management, education and employment.	High	Low
NON-GOVERNMENT STAKEHOLDERS			
Industry 'peak body groups"	Purpose: Industry 'peak bodies' or trade associations are industry groups with allied interests. They share industry information, discuss issues, develop stand-ards, support education and training, and establish rules for best practice within their industry. Interest: Employment and education, poverty and disadvantage, settlement impacts on existing industry/industrial estates.	Medium	Medium
Land Development and Subdivision Industry	Purpose: Predominantly prepare land new dwellings and are also involved in developing land for non-residential buildings and other applications such as transport infrastructure. Interest: Greenfield development, land development opportunities/restrictions.	High	Medium
Life Saving Victoria	Purpose: To prevent aquatic related death and injury, and educate communities in water safety, swimming and resuscitation, and ensure the safety of aquatic environments and venues. Interest: Population growth in coastal areas, community education on water safety. lsv.com.au	Medium	Low
Research Organisa-tions	Purpose: Drive studies in a wide variety of fields, including but not limited to environment, climate change, health, finance, and agriculture. Organisations may be private business, government funded or aligned to universities. Interest: All impacts of settlement planning.	Medium	Low
Universities	Purpose: Universities are higher education providers and undertake research. Interest: Education and employment opportunities, associated research in planning, environmental management, sustainability, climate change, sociology, psychology, and public health.	Medium	Low
Utility Providers	Purpose: Include both infrastructure providers (distributors) and service providers (retailers) for electricity, water, oil, gas, sewerage and communication services to communities and businesses. Interest: Network expansion, demands and stability, network stability in high risk areas, network impacts to areas of environmental sensitivity, supply risks in the context of climate change.	High	Medium

Stakeholder *refer note above	Description of purpose and likely interest in planning process	Level of interest *refer note above	Level of influence *refer note above
GOVERNMENT STAKEHOLDERS			
Agriculture Victoria (Department of Jobs, Precincts and Regions)	Purpose: Creates the conditions to sustainably develop the Victorian economy and grow employment. Interest: Drought, loss of agricultural land, food security, financial and environmental impacts to agricultural productivity, and loss of employment in the sector. Home | Agriculture Victoria	High	Low
Ambulance Victoria	Purpose: Provides pre-hospital care, medical transport and emergency medical response across Victoria. Interest: Population growth, support infrastructure, hospital facilities, emergency management, settlement in high risk environments. ambulance.vic.gov.au	Medium	Medium
Committees of Management	Purpose: Are committees of volunteers appointed to manage, improve and maintain Crown land reserves that have been set aside for the benefit of the people of Victoria. Interest: Coastal foreshores, recreation reserves, public halls, rail trails.	Medium	Medium
Department of Education and Training (DET)	Purpose: Offers learning and development support and services. Interest: Population growth, infrastructure and community services, education and employment. Department of Education and Training Victoria	Medium	Medium
Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning (DELWP)	Purpose: Portfolios cover climate change, energy, environment, water, forests, planning, land services, Aboriginal self-determination, and emergency management. Aim is to maximise connections between the environment, community, industry and economy. Interest: Population growth, land management and zoning, environmental management, infrastructure and planning, risk management, emergency management. Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning (delwp.vic.gov.au)	High	High
Department of Families, Fairness and Housing (DFFH)	Purpose: Portfolios cover housing, child protection, disability, ageing and carers, prevention of family violence, women, veterans, youth, multicultural affairs and LGBTQI+ and equality. Aim to ensure a fairer, safer and more inclusive Victoria. Interest: Resilient accommodation, temporary and accessible accommodation, emergency management.	High	High

| Stakeholder

*refer note above | Description of purpose and likely interest in planning process | Level of interest

*refer note above | Level of influence

*refer note above |
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| Department of Health (DH) | Purpose: Portfolios cover health, ambulance services, mental health and ageing. Aim is to ensure the improvement in the health and wellbeing of Victorians.

Interest: Resilient accommodation and buildings, road networks, emergency management, temporary buildings for service provisions. | High | High |
| Department of Jobs, Precincts and Regions (DJPR) | Purpose: Portfolios cover precincts and suburbs, mining and resources, local government, regional development, small business, agriculture, tourism, sports and major events. Aim is to ensure Victoria's strong economic performance by growing industries and regions.

Interest: Precincts and suburbs, mining and resources, regional development, small business.

Home | Jobs, Precincts and Regions (djpr.vic.gov.au) | High | High |
| Department of Transport (DOT) | Purpose: Portfolios cover transport infrastructure, public transport, ports and freight, roads, fishing and boating.

Interest: All aspects of transport planning for new settlements.

Home | Department of Transport | Medium | High |
| Emergency manage-ment committees – state, regional and municipal | Purpose: Committees are involved in emergency management governance, planning and advisory functions at state, regional and municipal levels.

Interest: Emergency management, risk mitigation and resilience, settlement in high risk areas, capability and response planning. | High | High |
| Emergency Manage-ment Victoria (EMV) | Purpose: Supports the Emergency Management Commissioner to lead and coordinate emergency preparedness, response and recovery across Victoria's emergency management sector in conjunction with communities, government, agencies and business.

Interest: Population growth, risk and emergency management, settlement in high risk areas.

Homepage | Emergency Management Victoria (emv.vic.gov.au) | High | High |
| Environment Protection Authority (EPA) | Purpose: Prevent and reduce harm to the environment and human health from pollution and waste, including managing compliance and enforcement, issuing works approvals and licenses.

Interest: Building/zoning compliance for new settle-ments, land management, environmental impacts, emergency management.

Home | Environment Protection Authority Victoria (epa.vic.gov.au) | Medium | Meidum |

Stakeholder *refer note above	Description of purpose and likely interest in planning process	Level of interest *refer note above	Level of influence *refer note above
Fire authorities – Country Fire Authority (CFA) Fire Rescue Victoria (FRV)	Purpose: CFA is a volunteer fire service responsible for fire suppression, rescues and response to other accidents and hazards across most of the state of Victoria. The CFA shares responsibility for fire services with FRV who employs full time staff across Melbourne and Victoria's major regional centres, responding to fires, complex rescues, road crashes, emergency medical calls and hazardous chemical spills. Interest: Population growth, support infrastructure, settlement in high risk environments, built environment, property maintenance and regulation, climate change and bushfire risks. CFA (Country Fire Authority) Fire Rescue Victoria (frv.vic.gov.au)	High	High
Floodplain Management Authorities (Catchment Management Authorities (CMAs) and Melbourne Water MW)	Purpose: Develop and implement regional floodplain management strategies in consultation with local stakeholders and communities. They also provide flood advice to municipal councils and landholders. The Marine and Coastal Act 2018 enables coastal CMAs and MW to provide advice on matters relating to coastal erosion. Ten floodplain management authorities operate across Victoria comprising nine CMAs within rural areas and MW within Port Phillip and Western Port Catchment Region. Floodplain Management (water.vic.gov.au) Catchment management authorities (viccatchments.com.au)	High	High
Local Government	Purpose: Has an important role in land use planning and development approvals and administering the local planning scheme. Also coordinate and provide physical and community infrastructure, including the local drainage network. Interest: Population growth, property tax, property values, land release/supply, development opportunities/restrictions, land management and zoning, strategic planning, environmental management, infrastructure, risk and emergency management, settlement in high risk areas, education and employment.	High	High
Metropolitan Waste and Resource Recovery Group	Purpose: Responsible for coordinating and facilitating the delivery of waste management and resource recovery across metropolitan Melbourne, including municipal solid waste, construction and demolition waste and commercial and industrial waste. Interest: Waste management in new settlements, waste minimisation, environmental impacts. Metropolitan Waste and Resource Recovery Group (mwrrg.vic.gov.au)	Low	Low

Stakeholder *refer note above	Description of purpose and likely interest in planning process	Level of interest *refer note above	Level of influence *refer note above
Minister for Planning	Purpose: Regarding planning has a range of functions and powers relating to the Victoria Planning Provisions, planning schemes and planning permit applications, and the Heritage Act 2017. Interest: All aspects of settlement planning. premier.vic.gov.au/category/ministers/minister-for-planning	High	High
Municipal Fire Prevention Officers	Purpose: Act as the executive officer of the Municipal Fire Prevention Committee and are responsible for issuing permits to burn during the fire danger period and issuing fire prevention notices for hazard removal to private landowners in their municipality. Interest: Settlement in high risk areas, landowner compliance with fire hazard removal.	Medium	High
Parks Victoria	Purpose: A statutory authority of the Victorian Government, responsible for managing land and marine parks and reserves making up 18 per cent of Victoria's landmass, 75 per cent of Victoria's wetlands and 70 per cent of Victoria's coastline. Interest: Population growth and parks visitation increase, environmental impacts of settlement, settlement in high risk areas, environmental protection. Parks Victoria	Low	Low
VicRoads	Purpose: Responsible for vehicle registration and licensing functions and some heavy vehicle functions. Interest: Service provision to new settlement communities. vicroads.vic.gov.au	Medium	High
Victoria Police	Purpose: Provide policing services to the Victorian community within 21 divisions and four regions - North West Metro, Southern Metro, Eastern and Western. Interest: Population growth and increased need for service provision, regional service boundaries, road safety, community safety, community health, emergency management, settlement in high risk areas. police.vic.gov.au	Low	Low
Victoria State Emergency Service (VICSES)	Purpose: A volunteer based organisation, providing emergency assistance to minimise the impact of emergencies and strengthen the community's capacity to plan, respond and recover, when emergencies occur. Interest: Population growth, settlement in high risk areas, risk and emergency management, community education for risk reduction. Home	Victoria State Emergency Service (ses.vic.gov.au)	High	Medium

Stakeholder *refer note above	Description of purpose and likely interest in planning process	Level of interest *refer note above	Level of influence *refer note above
Victorian Planning Authority (VPA)	Purpose: Undertake visioning and long term planning, including strategic planning and infrastructure coordination for future growth in cities and regional towns to ensure Victorians have equitable access to employment, public transport, attractive public space and affordable housing. Interest: Infrastructure, employment and education opportunities, housing affordability. vpa.vic.gov.au	High	High

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