

24th August 2020

Delivering successful shovel-ready projects with engagement

The International Association for Public Participation (IAP2) Australasia would like to take this opportunity to applaud the proactive approach by State and territory governments around Australia, to support our community with jobs and meaningful infrastructure investment.

We support and are encouraged by Government's focus to work with industry on nation building projects and critical infrastructure, accelerating 'shovel-ready' projects. However, to deliver sustainable and valued project outcomes, it will be critical that engagement with communities continue.

Call to action

IAP2 Australasia as the peak body for engagement professionals, representing 10,000 members, calls for and encourages <insert name> to make a commitment to ensuring that authentic engagement remains an integral component of shovel-ready projects.

Minimise social risk through engagement

Quality community engagement provides: the community the opportunity to input into the project providing valuable local knowledge; the government with a channel to promote and explain its agenda; and is an important strategy in minimising social risk associated with community opposition which has contributed to the delay, cancellation or mothballing of significant infrastructure projects in the last decade.

The recent escalation of covid-19 cases, deaths and other concerning events and behaviours highlight that quality engagement is needed now more than ever, and is in fact critical to support the Australian recovery.

The evidence for Engagement

Evidence for increased engagement includes:

- License to operate is the No. 1 ranked risk – 2 years in a row.
Source: Top 10 Business Risks and Opportunities – 2020 (EY)
- Community opposition has contributed to the delay, cancellation or mothballing of more than \$20B of infrastructure projects in the last decade.
Source: The Australian Infrastructure Audit 2019
- Better functioning cities and towns could deliver a \$29B increase in GDP in the long term.
Source: The Australian Infrastructure Audit 2019
- 80% of Australians indicate it is important that government considers the views of the community when planning of investing in major infrastructure
Source: The Australian Infrastructure Audit 2019

- 82% of businesses said “communicating and engaging with stakeholders openly was seen as the most critical factor for building trust”

Source: Creating value and balancing stakeholder needs (KPMG and AICD survey – 2019)

IAP2A policy position

As the peak body for the community and stakeholder engagement sector, IAP2 Australasia, believes that engagement, when done well, improves social, environmental and economic outcomes and increases trust in the democratic process.

The IAP2 response

IAP2 supports the Australasian sector with: training and educational resources; and tools and standards on best practice public participation and engagement. Recently, these have included resources to address the devastating bushfires followed quickly by the COVID-19 pandemic.

To support communities, IAP2 Australasia launched a **Bushfire Disaster Recovery Hub** compiling and sharing resources to help those navigating disaster response engagement in affected areas. We called-for and published a database of Engagement Professionals willing to provide pro bono professional services to any Government agency or other organisation seeking assistance in engaging with community in the areas of disaster response; disaster recovery; and climate change education and awareness.

Building on this, we launched the **COVID-19 Information and Resources Hub**, again compiling and sharing resources, plus facilitating a number of webinars, including Tips for adapting in the days of COVID-19, plus a range of other advice and guidance to support engagement with communities.

In closing

IAP2 Australasia call for and encourages State and territory governments around Australia to make a commitment to ensuring that authentic engagement remains an integral component of shovel-ready projects, improving social, environmental and economic outcomes.

If you have any further questions, please do feel free to contact me directly at the contact details provided below.

Yours sincerely

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About IAP2 Australasia

The International Association for Public Participation (IAP2) is a global member association which seeks to promote and improve the practice of public participation or community and stakeholder engagement. The organisation incorporates individuals, governments, institutions and other entities that affect the public interest throughout the world.

As an international leader in public participation, IAP2 has developed tools that are widely used and acknowledged. These are the *Core Values for Public Participation* for use in the development and implementation of public participation processes; the *IAP2 Public Participation Spectrum* which assists with the selection of the level of participation that defines the public's role in any community engagement program; and, the *Quality Assurance Standard for Community and Stakeholder Engagement* which is recognised as the international standard for public participation practice.

IAP2 Australasia is the largest IAP2 affiliate in the world and has **10,000 members**.

Policy position

As the peak body for the community and stakeholder engagement sector, IAP2 Australasia, believes that engagement, when done well, improves social, environmental and economic outcomes and increases trust in the democratic process.

We advocate for all communities to be authentically engaged in decisions that affect them in alignment with the IAP2 Quality Assurance Standard for Community and Stakeholder Engagement.