

4th February 2021

Hon Grant Robertson
Minister for Infrastructure
Parliament Office
Private Bag 18888, Parliament Buildings
Wellington 6160
NEW ZEALAND

DELIVERED BY EMAIL: g.robertson@ministers.govt.nz

Dear Minister

Delivering successful shovel-ready projects requires good engagement

The start of a new year is a good time to reflect and build on the decisions (and challenges) of 2020, and optimistically focus on a recovery from the global COVID-19 pandemic and all its impacts.

The International Association for Public Participation (IAP2) Australasia would like to take this opportunity to applaud the proactive decision by the NZ Government in 2020 to invest \$3b into shovel-ready infrastructure, environmental and climate resilience projects, as well as transformative energy projects and enhanced regional digital connectivity.

We support and are encouraged by Government's focus to work with industry and local government 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 stakeholders and communities continue.

Call to action

IAP2 Australasia as the peak body for engagement professionals, representing 10,000 members, calls for a commitment to ensuring that authentic engagement remains an integral component of shovel-ready projects. Why you ask? Keep reading.

Minimise social risk through engagement

Conducting quality engagement to support these significant investment projects provides:

- stakeholders the opportunity to input into the project providing valuable local knowledge
- the government with a channel to promote and increase understanding of its agenda;

- an important strategy in minimising social and political risk; and
- simply it provides best practice for the long-term reputation and legacy of being good stewards of public spend.

The evidence for engagement

Evidence for increased engagement to reduce risk and speed up the delivery of projects to support economic recovery 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).

IAP2 Australasia 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 Australasia response

IAP2 Australasia continues to support engagement and public participation professionals 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 in Australia followed quickly by the global 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.

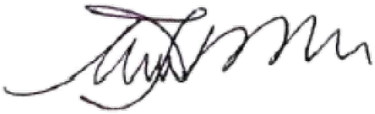
Building on this, we launched the **COVID-19 Information and Resources Hub**, consolidating shared resources, as well as facilitating a number of webinars, including Tips for adapting in the days of COVID-19, plus a range of other advice and guidance to support engagement with affected communities.

In closing

IAP2 Australasia calls for and encourages the NZ Government 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 using the details provided below.

Yours sincerely

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

Marion Short

CEO – IAP2 Australasia

MB: +61 420 427 497 | AU: 1300 4ENGAGE (4364 243) | NZ: 0800 4ENGAGE (4364 243)

EM: marion@iap2.org.au

About IAP2 Australasia

The International Association for Public Participation (IAP2) is the leading public participation organisation globally which seeks to promote and improve the practice of community and stakeholder engagement.

As an international leader in public participation, IAP2 has developed tools that are widely used and acknowledged. These are the **IAP2 Core Values for Public Participation** for use in the development and implementation of public participation processes; and the **IAP2 Spectrum** which assists with the selection of the level of participation that defines the public's role in any community engagement program. The Spectrum is widely used and is quoted in most community engagement manuals.

Additionally, there is the **Quality Assurance Standard for Community and Stakeholder Engagement**, which is recognised as the international standard for public participation practice.

IAP2 Australasia has 10,000 members throughout Australia and New Zealand – and is committed to advancing the practice of community and stakeholder engagement through education, advocacy and building partnerships.

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 through education and increasing awareness of authentic engagement and all its benefits, in alignment with the IAP2 Quality Assurance Standard for Community and Stakeholder Engagement.

Advocacy position

IAP2 Australasia advocates:

1. That communities are authentically engaged in decisions that affect them; and
2. for engagement to be mandated and defined in legislation, policy and guidelines.

Authentic engagement recognises the six principles included in the UN Human Rights Council Guidelines on the effective implementation on the right to participate in public affairs;

- Enabling environment
- Safety
- Equality
- Empowerment
- Openness
- Remedies