

6 July 2020

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Local Government Victoria | Local Infrastructure | Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning
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Dear Sharon

Response to the Implementation of the Local Government Act 2020

The International Association for Public Participation Australasia (IAP2A) would like to take this opportunity to acknowledge and congratulate Local Government Victoria as part of Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning on the commencement of the implementation of the *Local Government Act 2020*.

This is a significant piece of work and represents a key milestone towards achieving the broader State's public engagement vision of "*Working together to make better decisions and improve the lives of Victorians.*"

Additionally, we congratulate you on your commitment to co-design this process with Local Councils and embed deliberative community engagement as one of the principles in the Act. And, we thank you for building on the values and standards developed by IAP2, which are widely used and globally recognised.

IAP2A represents almost 10,000 engagement professionals and supports the Australasian sector with: training and educational resources; and tools and standards on best practice public participation and engagement.

Additionally, IAP2 and UNESCAP are partnering to promote systematic, quality engagement of stakeholders and the public, to help governments and others who lead and design engagement processes to develop structured, well-planned and meaningful engagement.

Together, we believe that promoting well-planned and meaningful engagement contributes towards the achievement of the 2030 Agenda on Sustainable Development and its framework of Sustainable Development Goals (SDG). In particular, engagement is central to achieving the SDGs and is intrinsic to **Goal 16: Peace, Justice and strong Institutions** and **Goal 17: Partnerships for the Goals**. We would welcome the opportunity to discuss potential collaborations with Local Government Victoria in the implementation of the new *Local Government Act 2020*.

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

Yours sincerely

Marion Short

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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 almost **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 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;
2. 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
3. for engagement to defined in legislation and/or policy; and
4. That education and awareness strategies are implemented so that communities increase their levels of participation, recognising it both as a right and a duty.