

Port Phillip Bay Coastal Hazard Assessment

Communication Reference Pack Tool #5: Targeted interviews



Targeted interviews to gather information and feedback from key stakeholders

Interviews can be used to elicit specific information or reflections on certain aspects of the project or on a topic. Interviewees are generally selected to participate, based on knowledge, experiences and insights they may be able to share on a particular topic or theme, often due to the role they hold in their profession, in a stakeholder/interest group, or as a community member.

Interviews can be used in a variety of ways and with various stakeholders, designed for a certain intent and desired outcomes. There are a variety of IAP2 participation goals, which shift throughout the project.

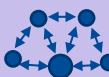
IAP2 Participation Goals: Consult



Involve



Collaborate



Purpose

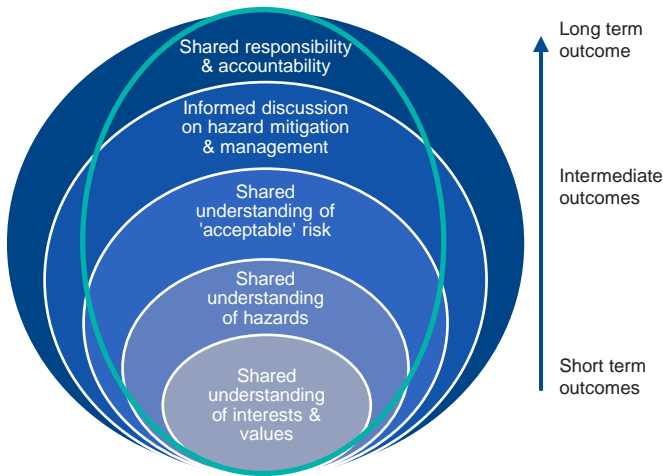
Undertaking interviews can serve a variety of purposes, depending on the stage of the project. This may include:

- Accessing and recording the knowledge of others, to learn from their experiences and better understand their context (geographically, strategically, operationally) in relation to coastal hazards.
- This knowledge might be used to:
 - Help shape the scope/direction of work being done.
 - Understand values, hazard understanding, knowledge gaps.
 - Gather feedback on an approach or document.
 - Understand management challenges, what has/hasn't worked in the past and why.
 - Tailor community messaging and communication.

Interviews can also help to develop relationships with key people, creating shared responsibility and accountability.

Desired outcomes

There are different outcomes for different stages of projects, starting with developing a shared understand of values and knowledge, through to fostering shared responsibility and accountability.



Engagement outcomes

The key outcomes for targeted interviews are:

- Values and needs of interviewees and the groups they represent are identified.
- Knowledge gaps are identified and inform approach for broader community or agency engagement.
- Relationships are established and fostered throughout the project.
- Findings are reported back to interviewees to continue the conversation or as briefing materials for follow-up interviews.



Key technical messages

Interviews have a goal of collecting a range of perspectives and insights around a topic. However, the discussion may also provide an opportunity to convey some key technical messages with stakeholders and community, potentially in a tailored, more personalised format. The engagement messages for undertaking interviews include:

- We value your opinion and the opinions of the people/organisation you represent, and also the time you've taken to share them.
- Information from the interview can be de-identified to protect privacy and encourage open discussion.
- We want to understand your experiences, current understanding, concerns and knowledge gaps, to inform our project approach.
- Your contribution can be used in a range of ways to inform the project (helping to refine the scope and analyses, key messaging to the broader community).

Line of questioning and technical messages conveyed through interviews will vary depending on the stage of the project.

Audience

Most suitable for	Less suitable for
Community leaders or key community group members	Larger groups General community
Technical experts in the community	
Traditional Owners	
Coastal managers, agency staff	

Process

1. Map out engagement plan and desired outcomes, highlighting where interviews may be appropriate and the key outcomes for each stage.
2. Confirm who will undertake interview (interviewer and scribe/support).
3. List desired interviewees and schedule interviews.
4. Develop targeted interview questions, either consistent for all interviewees or tailored, based on desired outcomes. Develop an interview template or visual aids as desired.
5. Send pre-reading and/or questions to interviewees to allow for preparation.
6. Undertake interviews.
7. Develop an approach to collate, synthesise and present interview outcomes.
8. Report on key outcomes and close the loop with interviewees highlighting how their information is being used. Follow up as required.

Tips and tricks

Tips and tricks to maximise interview outcomes include:

- Provide relevant information prior to the interview to allow for meaningful, informed contributions and capacity building. This can be done through pre-reading or a verbal briefing/presentation.
- Ensure interviewees are comfortable, including privacy and reporting protocols (Chatham House rules) and ice breakers.
- Do your research – know who you are talking to, the work they are doing and tailor questions accordingly.
- Have open-ended questions and ensure you're listening and can dig deeper into a response.
- Record interviews scribe (if permission granted).
- The interviewer for a round of interviews should be consistent. They should be knowledgeable / senior, with a good depth of knowledge on the subject.
- Continue the conversation through follow up interviews or close the loop on how information was used to inform work in a de-brief/follow up document.
- Depending on the existing relationship, can be successful as an informal conversation with key talking points, rather than formal questions.
- Offer to provide feedback about how data/information will be used.



Ensure your messages are appropriate for the desired outcome and audience.

Use your organisation's engagement plan/principles and local context to tailor messaging.

Seek input from delivery partners to ensure messaging is consistent, coordinated, and up to date.



Accessibility

Options to improve accessibility could include:

- Use of online platforms to avoid travel constraints.
- Use of language other than English to engage culturally and linguistically diverse groups.
- Inclusion of support people to assist in the discussion.

Potential risks

Risk	Mitigation
Interviewees don't feel engaged beyond initial interview.	Follow up discussion later in the process, connect interested parties with working groups or other engagement opportunities.
Lack of availability, trust or interest from key stakeholders.	Identify broad list of potential interviewees and allow time for scheduling. Allow written feedback if preferable, or shorter interviews. Build trust by contacting interviewees by phone to arrange the interview and assigning appropriate interviewers with good people skills.
Inappropriate interviewees (career level, personality, etc.)	Do your research and understand who the right people to interview are, what they do and how their contributions can inform the process.

Strengths and weaknesses

Strengths	Weaknesses
Scope to build strong, long-term relationships, provides personal approach.	Can be time-intensive to schedule and undertake.
Tailored and specific to information needs, ensuring relevant questions.	Broader perspectives may be missed (i.e. opinion of a few people).
Can be two-way information sharing/capacity building opportunity.	Feedback can be harder to quantify than questionnaires or surveys.

Indicative cost:	Low/Medium Depending on number of interviews and resourcing / outsourcing	\$ to \$\$
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Tools, materials and resources

The tools, materials and resources required to run targeted interviews include:

- Staff resources – interviewer, scribe/support.
- Recording tools or transcription.
- Pre-reading materials, visuals or presentations.

Difficulty level:



Moderate

Evaluation

Success can be evaluated through:

- Feedback survey.
- Involvement of the interviewee in the broader project.
- Need/opportunities identified through discussion.

Examples and references

- water.vic.gov.au/waterways-and-catchments/riparian-land/riparian-land/technical-information-and-reports/landholder-engagement-toolkit/techniques/evaluation-and-feedback/interviews

Alternative for online delivery

- Interviews can be held either over the phone or via video conferencing (e.g. Zoom™ and MS Teams™)

We acknowledge Victorian Traditional Owners and their Elders past and present as the original custodians of Victoria's land and waters and commit to genuinely partnering with them and Victoria's Aboriginal community to progress their aspirations.



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