

Port Phillip Bay Coastal Hazard Assessment

Communication Reference Pack Tool #9: Interagency engagement



A coordinated and well-designed engagement approach to help communicate, collaborate and plan for coastal hazard adaptation across multiple organisations

Coastal hazard impacts and adaptation management responsibilities span across many services, disciplines and entities. What happens in our coastal and marine areas is often of interest to numerous parties. Working collaboratively and cohesively with other relevant agencies and organisations will be an important aspect of the successful design and implementation of coastal hazard adaptation planning.

Building capacity, awareness and relationships across organisations is key to planning a coordinated and appropriate coastal hazard management and adaptation approach. Good engagement planning between organisations is critical and needs to be well organised to ensure clear and consistent messaging and targeted discussions. Engagement should be designed to encourage and enable sharing of aspirations and expectations as well as communicate potential challenges and constraints faced by each organisation.

Interagency engagement may require various points of contact at different project stages and involve people at a range of levels. There may be times where discussions need specific people in a specific role or level – from executive through to operational staff. Sessions and activities must be tailored to the needs and interest of each group, and their role in their organisation.

There are a variety of IAP2 participation goals, which shift throughout the project.



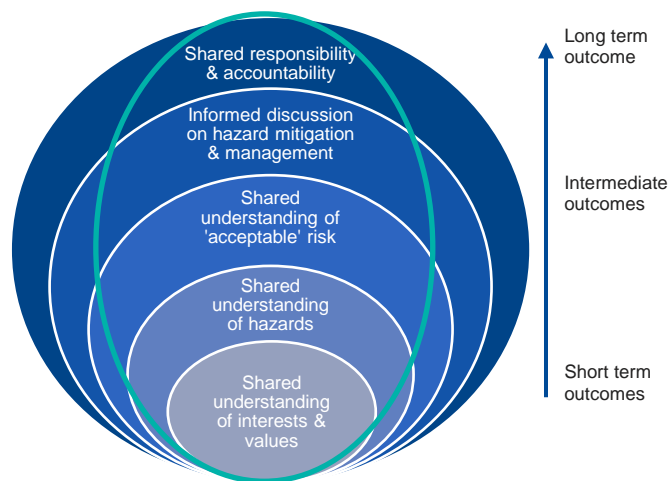
Purpose

The purposes of interagency engagement are to:

- Build relationships and encourage knowledge sharing, including gathering information on issues, priorities, changes, lessons learnt, risks etc.
- Build capacity of relevant staff within respective organisations who are actively involved in the project and coastal management, to ensure they are confident and equipped to engage within their organisation and align with internal processes.
- Assist different departments/agencies in meeting their own corporate requirements/objectives.
- Inform budgets and future planning initiatives.
- Build awareness of the project within each management organisation and ensure consistency in messaging to the broader community.
- Coordinate strategic decision-making, including opportunities for interagency collaboration, mutual benefit, partnerships, funding streams, etc.
- Agree on decisions, promote 'buy-in' and ownership of actions.

Desired outcomes

Interagency engagement is important for all engagement outcomes and can be tailored to each desired outcome. It is important to build the foundations at each phase internally before rolling out to the broader community.



Engagement outcomes

Key outcomes of interagency engagement are:

- Shared understanding of interests and values relevant for each organisation.
- Understanding of coastal processes, hazards and risk and confidence to deliver information to other stakeholders.
- Shared understanding of roles and responsibilities
- Informed discussion on hazard mitigation and shared ownership of decisions.
- Stronger working relationships and ongoing collaboration including opportunities for collaboration and cost-sharing.

Key technical messages

Technical key messages will vary through the different stages of the project. However, overall key messages include:

- Coastal areas are dynamic and ever changing, this change becomes a hazard when it intersects with our values and assets.
- Hazard magnitude, frequency and impact may potentially increase due to climate change.
- Building our understanding of coastal hazards and risk will help us all to proactively plan for the future through adaptation.
- Decisions must reflect the *Marine and Coastal Act (2018)*, Policy and Strategy.
- We are working together, there is no right or wrong, we will collaboratively make decisions.
- Coastal hazard management and adaptation is a shared responsibility and we all have a role to play across each of our organisations.
- We have to work collaboratively with other organisations and agencies as part of our adaptation approach.



Process

NB. A stakeholder engagement plan can be developed to plan and guide the broader engagement approach, identifying the timing, purpose and audience of necessary activities. This can be helpful if there is likely to be multiple sessions and different levels of engagement across multiple organisations.

1. Identify key agencies, their relevant teams and staff and their level of existing knowledge, capacity, authority and desired involvement.
2. Determine who are the right agency representatives, depending on the information, knowledge and authority needed for that stage of the project - from operational staff to managers and decision-makers, up to executive level.
3. Convey how the Coastal Hazard Assessment aligns to key outcomes/objectives, and accountabilities/responsibilities of different organisations. This can be done using a program logic or simple matrix and can be updated as engagement occurs.
4. Clearly define the purpose, audience and required outcomes of the engagement at each stage of the project.
5. Decide on appropriate formats for your desired audience and outcome, for example:
 - a. Study tours, site visits and timeline activities can help build an understanding of shared values and interests.
 - b. Presentations from experts or use of the wave tank can help build understanding of coastal hazards, risk, adaptation options.
 - c. Meetings and workshops can be used to have informed discussion on hazards and mitigation, including operational realities, objectives and constraints for each agency.
 - d. Email updates help keep staff informed and promote upcoming opportunities.

The program of interagency engagement may be dictated by resources and budget available.

6. Deliver the interagency engagement program using tips and tricks from this factsheet and other tools where necessary.
7. Regularly touch base with attendees to evaluate success of the program and maintain involvement.

Tips and tricks

Tips and tricks to make interagency engagement successful include:

- Develop a clear plan for engagement activities including the purpose, desired outcomes and audiences relevant at each stage.
- Utilise other tools in the Reference Pack such as pop-ups, timelines and the wave tank to build knowledge and capacity. These tools can

sometimes be 'tested' on other agency staff before being rolled out to the broader community.

- Include relevant presenters such as technical experts, with necessary expertise (if needed).
- Use existing networks to gather information and knowledge – what has worked elsewhere?
- Build into existing meetings and working groups such as local disaster management groups or infrastructure planning groups.
- Capitalise on existing interagency communication and engagement – e.g. regular updates via email, interagency newsletters, existing meetings, etc.
- Recruit the most relevant people from each department/organisation to be involved, but open some activities to all staff to foster broad interest.



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:

- Online meetings/workshops to encourage regional partners to participate without travel limitations.
- Utilise existing networks to broaden reach.
- Providing materials ahead of time for people to digest before key discussions.



Potential risks

Risk	Mitigation
Wrong people in the room.	Understand the organisation's structure. Consider engagement purpose, existing relationships and desired outcomes. Invite multiple staff members if uncertain.
Lack of interest.	Capitalise on any existing interagency engagement avenues. Demonstrate where the CHA aligns to corporate outcomes/objectives, accountabilities/ responsibilities and why it is important.
Time delays due to internal processes and delays in decision making for each agency.	Clear project outcomes, agreed timeframes, and empowerment for decision-making fostered early. Allow for some delays in timelines. Project plan, include dependencies and demonstrate project impacts due to delays. Communicate known delays early.
Time delays leading to rumour / speculation in community.	Preparation of engagement plan, including regular updates and staged release of information. Proactive and positive messaging. Communicate known delays early and include mitigation.
Inconsistent messaging.	Make key messages available to all participants, reiterate messages at beginning of all meetings.
Staff turnover.	Detail minutes and document meetings and workshops to allow efficient handover to new or replacement staff. Make factsheets and technical information readily available.

Strengths and weaknesses

Strengths	Weaknesses
Can draw upon a variety of knowledge and experiences within the group.	Can be difficult to schedule and get everyone together or get the right people.
Builds relationships between a range of agencies.	Can be conflicting priorities between agencies.
Promotes in-depth discussion and shared exploration of ideas and opportunities.	Can be time intensive.

Build capacity broader than the immediate project team.

Indicative cost:

Low

\$

Tools, materials and resources

The tools, materials and resources required to run internal engagement include:

- Staff time for planning and scheduling of meetings.
- Venue hire.
- Materials to inform discussions (pre-reading).
- Catering/workshop materials at in-person workshops.
- Resources for use of other tools (e.g. timelines, wave tanks, etc.).

Difficulty level:



Easy to moderate (depending on level of engagement)

Alternative for online delivery

- Use online meeting platforms such as Zoom™ and MS Teams™.
- Capitalise on online workshopping tools such as MURAL™ and Jamboard™.
- Use existing online platforms for advertising e.g. websites and inter-agency communications systems

Evaluation

Success of the interagency engagement can be evaluated through:

- Participant feedback (formal and informal).
- Quick polls or general reflections on sessions.
- Number of attendees at internal popups, workshops, etc

Examples and references

- Other activities that could be undertaken through interagency engagement may include the wave tank (see Tool #1) and coastal timelines (See Tool #2).

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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