Community Engagement:

Learnings from Villagewell's Placemaking Masterclass

Tools and tips designed to support you undertake Community Engagement in the Shire of Campaspe

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Purpose & history of this document

This document has been created using the content of a "Placemaking Masterclass" that was conducted by Village Well in Echuca during 2010. The aim of the workshop, which was supported by Campaspe PCP, was to increase the capacity of our member agencies to undertake effective community consultation. The masterclass also provided a number of ideas and opportunities that communities can use to create vibrant, connected spaces for people to live, work and play within.

*Throughout the document the **"green boxes"** contain information, perspectives and ideas that were generated during the Placemaking Masterclass by local Campaspe participants. These boxes provide a local context to the document and include some interesting information and learnings that can be applied to our work with communities.*

One of the outcomes of the day was the acknowledgement that undertaking a community consultation requires a significant investment of time and or resources, and is generally not easy to do. It is hoped that this document may provide some ideas and directions for people planning to undertake a consultative process.

Aspirations of the *Masterclass*...

"looking for new ideas"
"how to find people & soul of community"
"learn how to inspire & hook others"
"how to challenge community thinking"
"identify new models for working with community"
"how to manage aspirations of community vs. available resources"
"authentic engagement with vulnerable people"

Target Audience

The target audience for this guide is, in essence, anyone who is planning to undertake a community consultation. It will be useful for employees of local government, health services, community organisations, community planning groups, schools and government.

Acknowledgement of Village Well content

This resource has been produced as a local resource following a "*Placemaking Masterclass*" which was conducted by Village Well in Echuca in November 2010. The following content is a reproduction of that which Village Well presented at the workshop and we sincerely thank them for allowing us to include it in a localised guide for the Campaspe community. For more information, please visit www.villagewell.org.

What is '*Placemaking*'?

Placemaking is the process of creating meaningful and connected places. Place Making is an integrated approach to the development and revitalisation of communities in a way that reflects the needs and aspirations of the people and the unique story of a particular location.
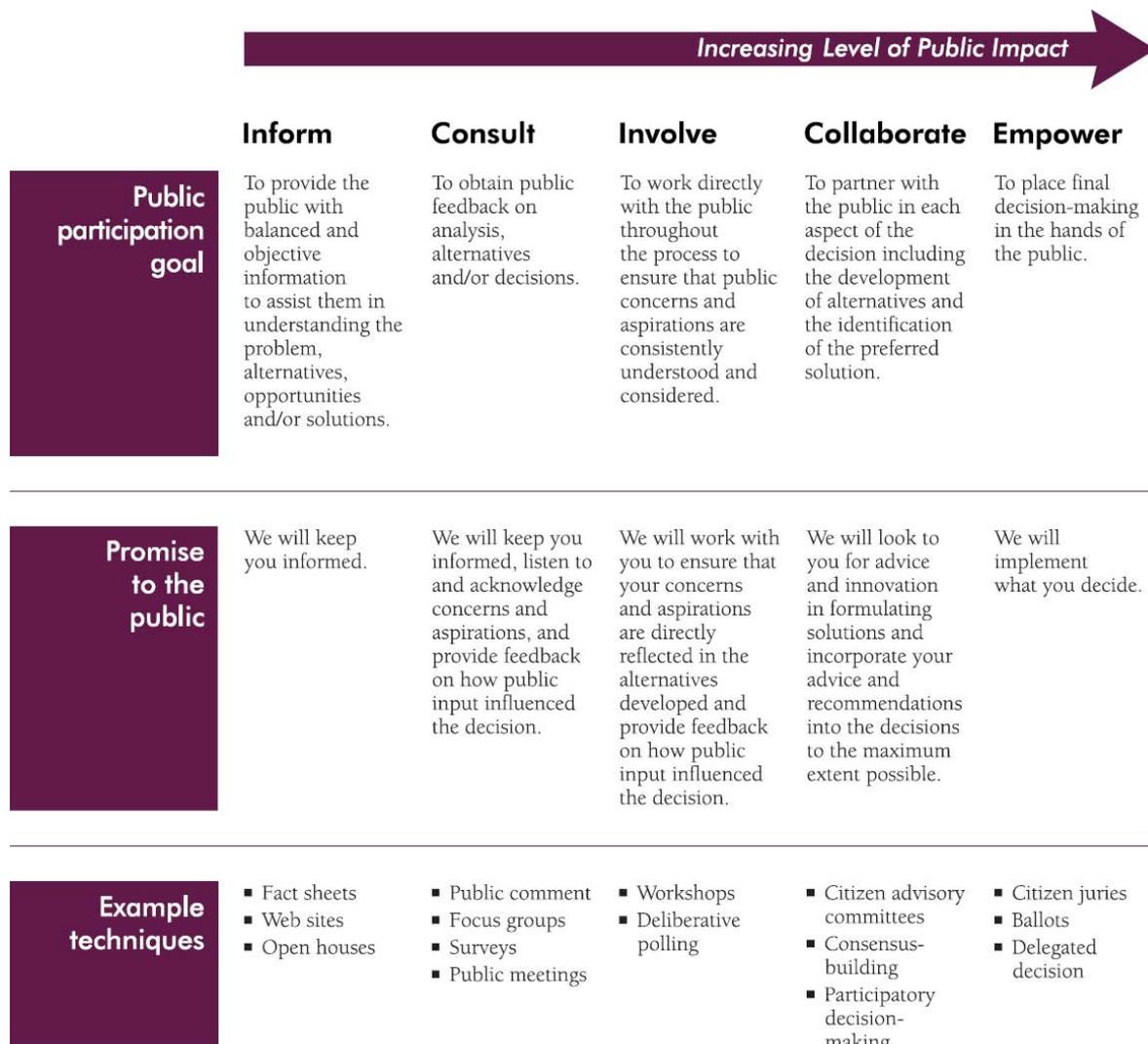
Principles of Engagement and Placemaking

Definition of Community Engagement

Community engagement is a series of activities that invites people to participate in creating or guiding a project/vision over an extended period of time.

IAP2 Spectrum of Public Participation

The International Association for Public Participation (IAP2) is an international association of members who seek to promote and improve the practice of public participation in relation to individuals, governments, institutions, and other entities that affect the public interest in nations throughout the world. IAP2 has developed a number of tools to support practitioner undertake community participation and assist in the planning and engagement with communities. The IAP2 Spectrum is one such tool that defines participation and provides example techniques.

IAP2 Spectrum of Public Participation

Increasing Level of Public Impact →

	Inform	Consult	Involve	Collaborate	Empower
Public participation goal	To provide the public with balanced and objective information to assist them in understanding the problem, alternatives, opportunities and/or solutions.	To obtain public feedback on analysis, alternatives and/or decisions.	To work directly with the public throughout the process to ensure that public concerns and aspirations are consistently understood and considered.	To partner with the public in each aspect of the decision including the development of alternatives and the identification of the preferred solution.	To place final decision-making in the hands of the public.
Promise to the public	We will keep you informed.	We will keep you informed, listen to and acknowledge concerns and aspirations, and provide feedback on how public input influenced the decision.	We will work with you to ensure that your concerns and aspirations are directly reflected in the alternatives developed and provide feedback on how public input influenced the decision.	We will look to you for advice and innovation in formulating solutions and incorporate your advice and recommendations into the decisions to the maximum extent possible.	We will implement what you decide.
Example techniques	▪ Fact sheets ▪ Web sites ▪ Open houses	▪ Public comment ▪ Focus groups ▪ Surveys ▪ Public meetings	▪ Workshops ▪ Deliberative polling	▪ Citizen advisory committees ▪ Consensus-building ▪ Participatory decision-making	▪ Citizen juries ▪ Ballots ▪ Delegated decision

Source: www.IAP2.org

Good Community Engagement Process

- People & Place come first – start with the community not the "experts".
- Develop and allow collaborative, interdisciplinary approaches and processes;
- Be open to learn from one-another;
- Become facilitators of positive vision & change
- Engage in actions & activities "in place", not in an alternate venue, from a distance, in an office or on the computer
- Develop a dedicated engagement position or unit within your organisation
- Seed and nourish community engagement champions and partnerships

Blocks to Community Engagement

- Lack of resources – money, time, ongoing funding;
- Lack of skills and training
- Lack of understanding /awareness of the positive impacts
- Profession loyalty – planners, architects, 'what we know' attitude
- Keeping control – informing but not engaging the community or 'we know the vision already' attitude
- Lack of leadership, allies or champions
- Lack of policy and incentive framework

Local Barriers...

money
power
personalities
not core business
stuck in "rules"
self-focused
generation gaps
fear of change
transient population
can't let go
working in silos
lack of optimism "it won't work"
too many "Johnny come lately's"

Key points to consider when planning community engagement

1. **Identify the purpose**
   - What is it about?
   - What are the key things you want to know?

2. **Identify limitations/constraints**
   - What is the budget and timelines?

3. **Identify continual process/evolutionary model of engagement**
   - How does this project carry through from previous consultations?
   - How can we avoid over consulting by building on findings from previous consultations
   - How does this project leave a legacy for future engagement?

4. **Identify the stakeholders**
   - Who are the stakeholders?
   - Who are the partners and co-decision makers?
   - Have we got the internal engagement working?

5. **Identify preferred engagement methods**
   - Which methods are appropriate for the internal and external stakeholders?

6. **Identify an ongoing engagement strategy**
   - Is there already a long-term engagement strategy for this community and how does it fit with the project?
   - How do we get all stakeholders to collaborate for the best possible outcomes for the community?
   - How do we engage the community in the implementation and ongoing governance of the project?
   - What are the different ways to get the community to participate?

7. **Identify governance methodology**
   - How to get the community involved in the governance of the project, e.g., steering committee, advisory group, community panel, etc?

8. **Identify communication strategy**
   - How best to communicate with identified stakeholders?
   - How to inform/communicate to the community about the consultation to be undertaken
   - How to inform/communicate findings and get sign off?
   - How to inform/communicate/engage the community in the final decisions, products and outputs?
   - Key steps to develop Communication Strategy include:
     1. Set communication objectives
     2. Have clarity on target market/s
     3. Create a project brand and name – created by the community
     4. Create a project leadership team
     5. Map out a strategy

Outcomes of Successful Engagement

- Evidence of community pride
- Emphasis on quality in business and community life
- Willingness to invest in the future
- Participatory approach to community decision making
- Cooperative community spirit
- Realistic appraisal of future opportunities
- Awareness of competitive positioning
- Appreciation of the stewardship of the natural world
- Active economic development program
- Attention to sound and well maintained infrastructure
- Careful use of fiscal resources
- Willingness to seek help from external sources

10 great things to do in Campaspe

1. visit the rivers
2. drink local wine
3. visit cafes, drink great coffee
4. relax and feel safe
5. enjoy good accommodation
6. visit the local markets
7. go for a walk – great signage
8. visit the Port of Echuca, ride on a paddle steamer
9. experience the local history
10. Enjoy the shops

- Ability to depersonalise politics
- Willingness to take risks
- Network ability
- Awareness of personal and community responsibility

Community Engagement Facilitators

Qualities, Attributes & Skills

- Have a good sense of self
- Values driven
- Motivated by the Big Picture (but hands on enough to get things moving – takes little steps towards the Big Vision)
- Create good collaborative processes and process design
- Skilled facilitator, networker, storyteller
- Have a sense of humour and fun
- Creates a flow and ease
- Promotes and celebrates diversity and creativity
- Entrepreneurial – creates a sense of passion and mission
- Build a shared framework
- Focused on results through good process design
- Preferable local to the community or has a strong affinity with the group
- Interest and passion to help connect people to the project

Facilitator Skills

- Clean out the closet – letting things go is okay
- employ different methods to engage
- community development is continual rather than one-off
- self-regulate language – give simple answers
- celebrate successes via media, events, rewards
- allow things to end – don't spread yourself too thin
- collaborate with other groups
- listen and stop saying "but"
- address unfinished business with community

Questions to ask yourself as a facilitator

- Do people understand why the project/process has gotten underway?
- Do people feel they have been informed about the process and the goals of the process (throughout the process)?
- Do people feel included?
- Have barriers to participation been thought about and, where possible, solved?
- Are people comfortable in the environment in which they are invited to participate e.g., formal meetings in a boardroom may be intimidating.
- Do people feel heard?
- Do people feel good about their contribution?
- Do people feel clear about their roles?
- Are there opportunities for people to learn and for leadership skills to be developed?
- Is the process safe enough for people to have disagreements, debates and discussions while believing that everyone involved has the best interests of the community at heart?
- Is there a sense that discussion and debate is balanced by actions which keep the process moving forward?
- Do people feel that they have been part of decision making processes?
- Do people feel a sense of ownership of the process and outcomes?

Working with disenchanted or disengaged communities

Approaches and tips for facilitators to use when working with disenchanted communities or for sensitive topics:

- Listen, provide feedback and seek sign off before moving forward
- Acknowledge past/current issues/mistakes
- Be transparent and provide information about the problem or issues, i.e., what processes need to be undertaken before action can take place
- Offer realistic timeframes
- Don't overpromise
- Make room for the loudest voices and seek out the silent or quieter voices
- Commit resources and time to seek solutions
- Commit to ongoing communication
- Commit to engaging in an ongoing way
- Provide opportunities for participation in decision making and governance

Methods of engagement

Walk the Beat

- Takes place in the place
- Observing and chatting to people to seek qualitative data i.e., stories, "the heat on the street', gossip, hot issues and topics
- Great for consulting with challenging or hard to engage people
- can be used to inform and promote and invite others to do the same (e.g. traders)

Place Conversations

- Takes place in the place
- Quantitative and qualitative surveys and questionnaires
- target difficult to engage people where the hang out

Listening Posts

- Takes place in place at a designated time and place
- Quantitative and qualitative surveys/questionnaires or exhibiting plans/designs for comment

Consultation events

- Takes place in place at a designated time and place
- Create your own event or hitch a ride on events that are already happening

Art or Cultural-based projects

How can we do this more effectively?

- find community champions
  - create supportive environments
  - communicate across organisations
- go out of your way – get out of comfort zone
  - incentives and rewards
    - be flexible
- listen and follow through
  - acknowledge broken promises and past mistakes
- be careful about your own agenda
  - be innovative
- define your target group and cater to them
  - don't over process
- don't get stuck in a rut
- bite sized pieces – small goals
- prioritise time to engage with community
- be open, admit to flaws, lack of knowledge
- community ownership is fundamental
  - keep people informed
  - be culturally aware

- Take place in place
- Work with a community cultural development artist to create work which illustrates the significance of a place can not only promote a community's sense of identity but also provides a means to beautify demonstrate care and pride in place
- Qualitative and meaningful are essential ingredients in engagement

Meetings

- **Community / public meeting** – are a more traditional way of consulting with communities which can best be utilised at the beginning of a process in the visioning stages
- **Charettes** – involve workshopping principles, ideas and instructions with the community and other stakeholders and drawing and developing plans on the spot
- **Simulations** – e.g. create giant maps of the town and ask small groups of people to move objects and buildings around to create their ideal place or create a space where participants can come and go during particular hours and have a look and/or contribute to the evolution of the space
- **Attending meetings** – attending meetings that are already planned is an efficient and great way to target particular groups e.g. traders associations, service delivery organisations, ethno-specific groups and associations, play groups
- **Focus Groups** – Focus groups are an excellent way of targeting particular demographics. These groups can sometimes be arranged through service providers and community groups
- **One-to-one interviews** – this is a great way to target community leaders, service providers, community groups and business leaders. Quantitative and qualitative data can be obtained and an in depth insight gained into a place by the key players and influencers of that place.

Café Conversations

- Minimum of four or five per table
- A host for each table who acts as the note taker
- After a set time, everyone moves to a new tables except for the host
- Three rounds of progressive conversations
- Everyone is encouraged to participate and support the host in summarising and note taking (write, draw, doodle, etc)

Open Space Technology

- The four principles of running an open space process:
  - Whoever comes is the right people: this alerts the participants that attendees of a session are classed as "right" just because they care to attend.
  - Whatever happens is the only thing that could have: This tells the attendees to pay attention to events of the moment, instead of worrying about what could possibly happen
  - Whenever is starts is the right time: clarifies the lack of any given schedule or structure and emphasises creativity and innovation
  - When it's over, it's over: encourages the participants not to waste time, but to move on to something else when the discussion ends.

New media/technologies

- Questionnaires – where everything old becomes new again
- Facebook, twitter, blogging and other social networking

Quaker Dialogue

- Process:
    - A question is formulated that each person is asked to address
    - Each person speaks in turn, usually around a circle
    - Anyone may pass and take their turn later if they don't feel ready when their turn comes around
    - Each speaker takes as long as the need to fully express themselves (dependant on group numbers and time available)
    - No one is allowed to comment on or rebut anyone else's statement

Small wins

"Small wins" should be incorporated into the early phase of all projects following community engagement. The idea is that something is visibly achieved within a short timeframe to demonstrate your commitment to the overall process. Small wins will build trust, maintain enthusiasm and lift the profile of the project/initiative.

Characteristics of small wins

- low budget
- achievable
- easy/quick to implement
- tap into local skills/resources
- visible

Examples of small wins

- clean up day
- create a community garden
- create a brand/logo
- street art installations – e.g. paint street bins, gates, planter boxes in common theme/colours
- erect "bollards" or "totems" with local significance

What steps do we take next?

- include small wins in planning
- listen to community more
- "let" community contribute more
- pay community members to deliver "small wins"
- acknowledge multiculturisn
- acknowledge lifestyle sensitivities – *rurals vs townies*
- create opportunities for new conversations/ideas
- know who to partner with
- do better internal collaboration
- share knowledge, stories, facilities and expertise
- get people to "own" their communities
- go broader – engage people/services from "outside"
- transparency
- promote and celebrate small wins/achievements
- use the language of the community
- concentrate effort into things that can be achieved
- develop skills to bring about change
- carefully manage expectations
- be honest and upfront
- take the meeting out of the meeting

Your Role & Responsibility

We acknowledge that community engagement requires time and effort and therefore needs to be adequately resourced. So while we may struggle to apply these principles and techniques to our everyday work we challenge you to apply these to at least one program or project you will undertake during the next 12 months.

Useful tools, links & examples

New York Academy Partnership Analysis tool – Can be used to analyse strengths, weaknesses and the performance of a partnership. http://partnershiptool.net/

VicHealth Partnership Analysis Tool – A useful tool for analysing partnerships – particularly good early in the partnership to clarify stakeholder expectations. http://www.vichealth.vic.gov.au/~/media/About%20Us/Attachments/VHP%20part%20toollow%20res.ashx

Communication Strategy Template – attached as Appendix 1.

VicHealth Equity Lens Tool – Will assist your planning exercises to ensure inclusiveness and focus on disadvantaged members of the community. http://www.vichealth.vic.gov.au/~/media/ResourceCentre/PublicationsandResources/Health%20Inequalities/PeoplePlacesProcesses.ashx

Tamarack Institute – An institute dedicated to the art and science of community engagement and collaborative leadership.   http://tamarackcommunity.ca/

International Association for Public Participation (IAP2) - IAP2 is an international association of members who seek to promote and improve the practice of public participation in relation to individuals, governments, institutions, and other entities that affect the public interest in nations throughout the world. http://www.iap2.org/

Renew Newcastle – an example of placemaking in progress. http://renewnewcastle.org/

Koori Night Market – Celebrating Indigenous arts & culture. http://www.koorienightmarket.com.au/

Rouse Hill Town Centre – Another example of placemaking – they started with a piazza and built a shopping hub around it. http://www.rhtc.com.au/

Ministry of Positive Change - Blog/website of placemaking and community engagement. http://ministryofpositivechange.wordpress.com/

Appendices

Communications Strategy Template

1. Objectives

The objectives of the communications strategy should be distinct from the objectives of the project as a whole. They should focus on what, not how, and be specific and measurable. They would usually start with 'to…' and be restricted to only a few key points.

2. Target audiences

The target audience is anyone who needs to be reached in order to achieve the strategy objectives. Depending on the project, they may either be bundled or separated as below, usually starting with the most significant groups.

   2.1. Primary
   2.2. Secondary
   2.3. Influencers (stakeholders)

3. Key messages

These are the succinct statements that should be included, or at least top of mind, in all communication with the target audience. Try and put yourself in the position of the audience and imagine how you might respond to these messages, this will help you decide whether or not you have included the most relevant points and worded them in the most appropriate way. In most cases, five would be an absolute maximum number of messages for one audience.

In some cases you may need to tailor individual messages to specific target audiences. The below table may assist you to show this.

Key message	Target audience
➢	➢
➢	➢

4. Tools

Also referred to a 'tactics' or 'activities', these are the mechanisms that will assist you to impart your message to the target audience. Listing individual activities with accompanying descriptions (as below) is one way to present the information. A matrix or table including key dates, audience targeted, responsible staff etcetera is another option for presenting this information (see attachments 1 & 2).

   4.1. Newsletter
      A monthly/quarterly newsletter will be developed and distributed to ??

      The newsletter will be published in hardcopy and electronically on websites and will provide information about ???. Distribution may be in hardcopy or via email.

   4.2. Internet site
      A website will be developed to provide easy access for ??

   4.3. Brochure/fact sheet

A brochure will be published in hardcopy and electronically and distributed to ?? Distribution may be in hardcopy or via email.

4.4.Hotline/designated phone number

A hotline or designated phone number will be identified to provide information about events, facilitate feedback or take registrations for consultation forums. It can be connected as a 1300 number where calls at are local costs for the caller or a 1800 number where calls are free to the caller.

4.5.Display

A static display will be designed to illustrate ?? Opportunities will be identified to position the display at community events.

4.6.Information sessions and consultation

Information sessions will be held with ???

Consultation forums will be conducted to meet the objectives of ?? The forums will require promotional activities to ensure appropriate participation, media coverage and input.

4.7.Poster

A poster will be produced and distributed to ??

4.8.Articles

Internal publications

Articles outlining ?? will be prepared and published in selected publications including:

➢ xxx

External publications

➢ Local government newsletters
➢ Regional newspapers
➢ Other journals and newsletters for relevant organisations (see attachment)

4.9.Network/database

Through consultation with relevant departmental staff, a database of relevant stakeholders will be developed including:

➢ xxx

The database will include email addresses to allow publications to be distributed electronically.

4.10. Advertising

Print, television, radio and online advertising will be ??

4.11. Other

Other promotional material can be considered including:

➢ A bookmark
➢ A fridge magnet
➢ A sticker
➢ A pen
➢ Post-it notes
➢ Writing Pads

Attachment 1 – Matrix of activity – Example 1

Activity	Key messages	Target audience	Timing	Responsibility
Launch	• The project is a joint initiative between the State government and private sector health facility operators. • Benefits to service users will be greatly improved through a more rigorous assessment process. • Consumer needs will be better understood under the new system.	All	End September	CCU / Project team
Fact sheet	• The project is a joint initiative between the State Government and private sector health facility operators. • Benefits to service users will be greatly improved through a more rigorous assessment process. • Consumer needs will be better understood under the new system.	Community Health Centres Koori Resource Centres Women's Health Centres	Distribute end September	Corporate Communications
Website	• The project is running on-time and on budget	All	Live by September	CCU
Media kit	• The project is a joint initiative between the State Government and private sector health facility operators. • Benefits to service users will be greatly improved through a more rigorous assessment process. • Consumer needs will be better understood under the new system	Metro and regional media	End September (on launch date)	CCU, Media Unit, Project Team
e-Newsletter	• The project is running on-time and on-budget	Peak bodies	Monthly from September	Project team
Forums	• The project is running on-time and on-budget • Under the new system, services are working in better partnership with each other to improve service delivery.	Peak bodies	Quarterly from September	Project team