Your Care, Your Say: consumer, carer and community engagement

A guide to engagement techniques

PART ONE

Introduction

The Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) is laying the foundations to ensure consumers, carers and communities at the centre of Tasmania's health and human services and that they play are engaged in planning, development, delivering and evaluation of services.

This guide to engagement techniques has been developed under the broader DHHS engagement framework set out in *Your Care, Your Say: Consumer, Carer and Community Engagement Strategic Framework and Action Plan*. The Guide is one of the number of action DHHS is committed to implementing during 2010-2011 to improve its consumer and community engagement practices.

In developing this guide we have drawn from a range of existing resources to put together a resource that would best suit DHHS. The guide is not intended to provide an exhaustive list, but rather it offers a broad selection of engagement techniques.

The guide covers 54 different engagement techniques. The techniques have been listed in alphabetical order. Each entry aims to provide an overview of the technique in terms of uses, methodology, resources implications and its strengths and weakness.

The best way to use this guide is to start by giving some consideration about the engagement task first, in terms of the task's objectives, scope, desired outcomes and what level of engagement is aimed for. This planning stage is covered in greater detail in Part Two. Once you have a better understanding of the engagement task it will be easier to peruse through Part Three of the guide in order to select the most appropriate engagement technique or techniques, as sometimes more that one are needed to ensure the best result.

Your feedback and comments about the guide are welcomed and can be provided to Susan Stipcevic-Webb (Susan.Stipcevic-Webb@dhhs.tas.gov.au).

Steps in the engagement process

Engagement is an ongoing task and assumes the 'key' stakeholders will be involved in a project or policy process from its inception right through to implementation and subsequent review. This is likely to entail that different consumers will be engaged at different times and as a result it is likely that the consumer opinions and views you collect and collate will change over time. Consequently it is useful to have good record keeping practices so that you can easily demonstrate how consumer input has been used and built upon over time.

'Key' stakeholders refers to people who will be most affected by the project or policy. For example, a change in the hours of operation of a health centre will most affect those currently using the centre and this includes individuals and organisations such as nursing homes or community transport service(s). The premise of engagement is that these individuals and organisations will be involved in the decision making process relating to the hours of operation of the centre.

1. Be clear about the task

Consider why it is important that consumers, carers and or community be engaged and their views and opinions sought in relation to the policy or project you are working on. The goals set at the beginning will inform the planning of engagement process and the selection of engagement techniques. These goals may evolve as the engagement process progresses, but without a clear upfront understanding it will be difficult to keep the engagement process focused.

Be clear about what aspects are open to change and which ones are set. For example, you may want to find out how the clients feel about the current application for housing process and how they think this process can be improved. It is important to be clear that there will always be some form of application process as this assist in identifying the level of need and urgency. However, there may be scope for improving the type of application process used, the kind of questions asked, as well as what type of information is provided to explain the application and selection process to those seeking housing and clients input into this process would be extremely valuable.

Questions that may help you clarify the engagement task:

- What is the nature of the task? Is it a review of an existing policy or service? Is it a new policy or project? Is it about implementation?
- Are there aspects of the task that are predetermined? For example, is there legislation that governs what can or cannot be

done, is the budget set, is action limited due to limitation in resourcing

- What in particular are we looking to find out? For example, are we wanting to find out if a particular service is addressing the needs of clients, are we wanting to find out if there are other ways clients would like a particular service delivered, are we trying to find out why a particular service is not being used as much as we had anticipated, are we trying to find how a particular group of people experience our services ... etc.

  Formulating the questions will be easier once the task has been clarified and defined.

2. Be clear about the purpose of engagement

Consumer, carer and community engagement is a long term commitment and involves a spectrum of approaches and methods. At DHHS, we broadly differentiate between five basic engagement approaches, as presented at Table 1. Fundamentally they show the different degrees of power sharing arrangements for the different engagement approaches. Each if the approaches are valid however, the key is when and how it occurs during the engagement process. For example, there is a need to inform the community of a change in the hours of operation, but it is important to consult and work with consumers and communities in partnership when determining what the appropriate hours of operation are.

Engaging consumers, carers and community members requires a genuine commitment to listening, to analysing with transparency, to reporting on what citizens have to say and to using the input to shape and inform the outcomes. It is not about consulting them after a decision has been made.

It is important to remember there is no one right way to engage. It is important that consumers, carers and community members feel their input is valued and that they understand how their contribution can influence the final decision as well as have an understanding of the constraints and limits. As part of any engagement it is vital that participants know whether they are contributing to the development of possible solutions, helping to choose between a set of options, providing their opinions for a research process or simply making minor changes around the edges of a pre-defined approach.

Questions that may help you clarify the purpose of engagement:

- What is the rational for doing engagement?
- What aspects can be influenced or changed?
- What outcomes are being sought?

3. Identify the audience

4. Select the engagement technique(s)

Choosing a technique or a combination of techniques for engaging is a critical step in the engagement planning process. It is important that you know what you are asking from the stakeholders when you decide to use a specific engagement tool. You should only choose engagement techniques that are suited to the purpose and this will depend on:

- The scope, context and outcomes sought.
- Who you seek to engage, and the social and political context.
- Budget, timeline and resources allocated
- Skills of team and availability of the members

Furthermore, you may need to use a mix of engagement techniques during the lifespan of the project, depending on the outcomes and the type of engagement sought.

Don't select an engagement technique on the basis of its popularity, novelty or similar reasons.

Questions that may help you select the appropriate engagement technique:

- Given the timeframe, budget and resources which engagement technique(s) might work best?
- What are the strengths/weaknesses of this technique/ these techniques?
- Will the audience be comfortable with this technique?
- Will I reach my target group with this technique?
- Will it help me achieve the outcomes?

5. Develop an engagement plan

This should not be a complex or long document. If the task is a complex one break it up into discrete but linked parts in accordance with the different engagement activities making a short, sharp and clear plan for each of the different engagement activities. The aim of the plan is to give a brief overview of:

- the aims of the project or task
- the engagement activity (i.e. to inform, to consult, to build a partnership)
- who the main audience is
- the propose of engagement, for example maybe best to do this in terms of questions needing to be answered
- what engagement technique(s) will be used
- the timeframe
- how the information will be used if comments are being sought

- how feedback will be provided in particular about reporting on progress

The plan should be shared with all those participating and working on the task: staff consumers, community members, stakeholders etc.

Other aspects that can be covered in the engagement plan are:

- the organisational context for the task. For example, has a recent review recommended this project/task be undertaken, is project/task a requirement under an accreditation scheme, is the project/task flowing from a recent Ministerial decision.
- the governance arrangements, for example, making it clear where the ultimate decision making rests
- the key challenges and risks

Part Two of this guide examines a number of engagement techniques and provides information about each of them to help you when choosing to select the most appropriate engagement technique for your situation.

Table 1: Engagement Range

	The aim of engagement	The commitment being made	Examples of engagement techniques
Inform	To provide balanced and objective information about the problem, alternatives, opportunities and/or solutions.	We will keep you informed	• Fact Sheet • Web Site • Open house
Consult	To work with the public throughout the process to ensure that public concerns and aspirations are consistently understood and considered	We will work with the you to ensure concerns and aspirations are reflected in the alternatives developed and we will provide feedback on how input influenced the decision	• Public comment • Focus group • Survey • Public meeting
Partnership	To work with the public in each aspect of the decision including the development of alternatives and the identification of the preferred solution	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	• Workshop • Deliberative polling
Delegation	To give the public control for making decisions within specific guidelines	We will authorise you to make decisions in relation to specific situations, which we will then implement.	• Citizen advisory committee • Consensus building • Participatory decision making
Control	To place final decision making in the hands of the public	We will implement what you decide	• Citizen Jury • Ballot • Delegated decision making

PART TWO

This section examines a number of engagement techniques. The list is in an alphabetical order and not in order of preference. Each techniques is examined in detail providing information about the type of engagement the technique fosters, practical information (i.e. cost, level of difficulty when to use etc) and a step by step guide to running it. This section has been prepared to help you understand the different engagement techniques and to help you select the one most suited to your engagement needs.

BACKCASTING

Engagement range	Partnership-Delegation Tends to facilitate high level of stakeholder participation in decision.
Difficulty level	Medium to hard
Cost	Medium to high ($1,000 - 10,000) depends on complexity of the task and the range of resources used
When might you use it:	To showcase a product, a plan or a policy To develop community capacity To develop an action plan
Number of people required to help organise:	Depends on the audience size but and level of complexity but could be organised by a single person. Two - three people may be needed where back casting is run with a larger audience and where a range of resources are used in the process.
Audience numbers it suits	Up to 30 people
Timeframe	6 weeks to 6 months depending on the scope of the task
Issues/resources to think about	Venue; Catering; Publicity; Staffing; Moderator/facilitator; Recorders; Audiovisual recording equipment and amplification; Overhead projectors; Data projectors; Screens; White boards; Printed public information sheets; Response sheets; Props for working in groups (pens, paper, pins, etc.); special needs requirements (wheelchair access, children's requirements
Innovation level	Can be highly innovative

Description:
Backcasting is a method of analysing alternative futures, often energy futures. Its major distinguishing characteristic is a concern with how desirable futures can be attained. It involves working backward from a desired future endpoint or set of goals to the present to determine the physical feasibility of that particular future and the policy measures required to reach that end point. End-points are usually chosen for a time 25 to 50 years in the future.3 Backcasting is similar to visioning, however backcasts are not intended to reveal what the future will be, but rather to weigh up a number of possible futures, and decide the implications and preferable options, then to map out steps along the way.

Objective:

- To weigh up the implications of different future options or policy goals.

Desired outcome:

- One preferred option from a number of future possibilities, and a series of ways that the desired endpoint can be achieved.

Uses/strengths:

- Backcasts are not intended to reveal what the future will likely be, but to indicate the relative feasibility and implications of different policy goals.
- Suggests the implications of likely futures, chosen not on the basis of their likelihood but on the basis of other criteria defined externally to the analysis (e.g. criteria of social or environmental desirability).
- Determines the freedom of action, in a policy sense, with respect to possible futures.

Special considerations/weaknesses:

- No estimate of likelihood is possible.
- Does not seek to discover the underlying structural features of the world that would cause the future to come about.

Step by step guide:

1. Define future goals and objectives, projecting 25-50 years into the future.
2. Specify the scenario by analysing the technological and physical characteristics of a path that would lead towards the specified goals.
3. Evaluate the scenario in terms of physical, technological and socioeconomic feasibility and policy implications.
4. Brainstorm ways this desired endpoint can be achieved, working backwards to the present.

BRAINSTORMING

Engagement range	Inform – Consult (best if used as an initial step of an engagement process)
Difficulty level	Easy
Cost	Low (up to $1,000)
When might you use it:	To canvas community issues
Number of people required to help to organise:	Depends on the audience size and level of complexity but could be organised by a single person. Two - three people may be needed where brainstorming is run with a large audience.
Audience numbers it suits	Up to 30 people
Timeframe	Up to 6 weeks (including reporting back to participates)
Issues/resources to think about	Whiteboard, butchers paper or projector; Pens, markers; Venue large enough for comfort; Facilitator
Innovation level	Low

Description:
Brainstorming is a method for developing creative solutions to problems. It works by focusing on a problem, and then having participants come up with as many deliberately unusual solutions as possible and by pushing the ideas as far as possible. During the brainstorming session there is no criticism of ideas – the idea is to open up as many possibilities as possible, and break down preconceptions about the limits of the problem. Once this has been done the results of the brainstorming session can be analysed and the best solutions can be explored either using further brainstorming or more conventional solutions.

Brainstorming is useful in warming up a workshop and creating a sense of unity between workshop participants by 'breaking the ice' between them.

Objective:

- To develop the broadest possible range of creative options, to evaluate these, and to select the best.

Desired outcome:

- A better solution to a community issue or proposal because a wider range of options has been canvassed.

Uses/strengths:

- Can encourage creative solutions.
- Can serve as a warm-up exercise.
- Can replace conventional participation tools where such tools are inappropriate.

- Can assist in developing unity between participants.

Special considerations/weaknesses:

- Ideas are unrestrained and may not be achievable.
- Sessions may be difficult to record.
- Realistic outcomes are not guaranteed.
- Allow time to engage jury and facilitator, put together briefing papers and contact ‘experts’.
- Jury can take up to four days to consider its ‘verdict’.

Step by step guide:

1. Select participants from as wide a range of disciplines with as broad a range of experience as possible. This brings many more creative ideas to the session.
2. Select a leader for the session, who can:
   2.1 Outline any criteria that must be met
   2.2 Keep the session on course
   2.3 Encourage an enthusiastic uncritical attitude among brainstormers.
   2.4. Encourage participation by all.
3. Set times for the whole brainstorming session, and for generating ideas.
4. Keep fresh ideas coming, and welcome creativity.
5. Do not allow any one train of thought to dominate for too long.
6. Do not criticise or evaluate during the brainstorming session (criticism stifles creativity and spoils the fun).
7. Record ideas no matter how unrealistic, until there are no more ideas, or the time allocated for generating ideas is up.
8. Record all ideas on a whiteboard or projector so that all participants can see all the ideas.
9. Encourage ‘spark off’ associations from other people’s ideas, or combinations of ideas.
10. Either evaluate solutions at the end of the brainstorming session to agree on the most practical way forward, or record the session either as notes, tape recording or video for later evaluation.

BRIEFINGS

Engagement range	Inform
Difficulty level	Medium to hard
Cost	Low to medium ($1,000 - $10,000)
When might you use it:	To showcase product, plan, policy To inform or communicate about an iissue
Number of people required to help to organise:	Depends on the audience size and level of complexity but could be organised by a single person.
Audience numbers it suits	Up to 30 people
Timeframe	Organising it can take time depending on audience, location etc. Allow up to 4 moths.
Issues/resources to think about	Staffing; Facilitators; Overhead projectors; Data projectors; Projection screen; Printed information as handouts
Innovation level	Low

Description:

Briefings are often a way of providing information on a specific issue or initiative to a special audience. The presentation may be delivered by an industry, government or organisation's representative, and is typically followed by detailed discussions in a question and-answer format.

Briefings are useful as a public relations activity when an identified group is going to be affected by proposal. The use of existing meetings of social and civic clubs and organisations as a forum for briefings to inform and educate is often used.

Briefings may provide some preliminary ideas of community issues based on questions and feedback at the briefing.

Objective:

- To inform stakeholders of a project, product or proposal and provide them with a chance to ask questions.

Desired outcome:

- Informed stakeholders.

Uses/strengths:

- Used when stakeholders are identified as being more directly affected by an issue than the general population and you want to inform them first.
- Provides a forum to interact directly with a particular group and allows for detailed explanation of issues, circumstances and implications unique to the group.
- Allows sponsor to retain control of information/presentation.
- Allows sponsor to reach a large number of individuals who are not attracted to other participatory forums, as this forum is specifically designed for them.

- Provides an opportunity to expand project mailing list.
- Allows presentations to be tailored with specific information suited to different groups.
- Can build community good will

Special considerations/weaknesses:

- Purpose and timeframe need to be stated clearly at the outset.
- If not appropriately targeted, project stakeholders may not be in target audience.
- The topic may be too technical.
- Does not provide a forum for making decisions.
- May raise expectations of the targeted audience.
- Stakeholders may be disillusioned because the process is used as a means to inform them and not take on board their ideas, interests and concerns.
- Concerns of stakeholders need to be recorded.

Step by step guide:

1. Prepare presentation materials using (e.g. PowerPoint, overhead transparencies, etc.) thinking about the specific interests of the target audience. Also take printed material and have background information available.
2. Select groups and make offers for a briefing (telephone and/or send letters to confirm date and times). It is important to accommodate group/community needs as much as possible.
3. Clarify whether the groups are willing to promote the event, or whether you need to provide promotional material (flyers, posters, newsletter articles).
4. KISS - keep it simple and short.
5. Bring visuals if possible, and talk about case studies or personal experiences to illustrate the points you want to make.
6. Outline opportunities for ongoing participation.

CITIZEN COMMITTEES

Engagement range	Partnership /Delegation/Control depending on the terms of reference
Difficulty level	Medium to hard
Cost	Medium to high ($1,000 - $10,000)
When might you use it:	To discover community issues To develop community capacity To develop action plan To communicate an issue To build alliances, consensus
Number of people required to help to organise:	Depends on the audience size and level of complexity but generally will need 2-3 people to organise and help run.
Size of audience	Medium 11–30 people Large more than 30 people
Timeframe	Organising it can take time depending on scope, audience numbers, location etc. Allow up to 6 week to 6 months)
Issues/resources to think about	Venue; Catering; Staffing; Moderator/facilitator; Overhead projectors; Data projectors and screen; Props for working in groups (pens, paper, pins, etc.); Children's requirements
Innovation level	Medium

<u>Description:</u>

Also known as public advisory committees and public liaison committees, citizen committees consist of a group of representatives from a particular community or set of interests appointed to provide comments and advice on an issue. Generally, relevant community groups and agencies are invited to nominate as members of the committee, although people with specific skills may also be asked.

Members meet regularly to provide ongoing input and advice over the duration of the project. These generally have an agreed life span and are normally organised at the local level to address a specific issue.

<u>Objective:</u>

- To provide broad-based input into planning and decision-making from a range of groups and agencies that are affected by a proposal or issue.

<u>Desired outcome:</u>

- Depending on the level of delegation/responsibility:
  - have ownership of a project or issue and take responsibility for following through with the agreed actions
  - development of plans or solutions based on better information and where a wider range of issues has been scoped as a result of this broad-based and extensive consultation.

Uses/strengths:

- Allows the involvement and input of a range of people (e.g. fishers and surfers as well as relevant government departments).
- Allows development of consensus (where achievable) or directions for action on complex issues that affect the broad community.
- Effectively disseminates detailed information and decisions to members of the organisations or community sectors represented on the committee.
- Provides opportunities for exploring alternative strategies and building on commonalities and alliances.
- Provides for a detailed analysis of project issues, timelines and deliverables and a focus on the outcomes.
- Participants gain an understanding of other perspectives leading toward an agreed, integrated outcome.

Special considerations/weaknesses:

- Participant selection is a major consideration:
- The range of interests must be broad enough to represent all those affected, and those with relevant interests and skills
- Community members must be willing to work together on a common challenge
- Organisers must be aware of potential conflicts
- The original terms of reference need to be agreed upfront and recorded.
- Contact should be maintained with the committee to ensure that it does not take on a life of its own.
- Members' comments to the media may not coincide with the sponsor's policy. A set of principles can be developed to avoid this happening.
- The general public may not embrace committee recommendations.
- Members may not achieve consensus (although consensus may not be the goal).
- The sponsoring agency or agencies must accept the need to give and take.
- May be time and labour intensive if the issue is significant.

Step by step guide:

1. Consider the demographic profile of the community to ensure most of those groups that will be affected by an issue or proposal are represented.
2. Consider special interest groups.
3. Consider groups most affected by the issue.
4. Conduct stakeholder analysis prior to inviting groups to propose.
5. Be flexible to allow other representatives to join if they make themselves known during the participation process (however, it is more effective not to allow alternative representatives, as they can highjack the agenda and/or may need extra briefings that slow down the process).
6. Clearly state the role of the citizen committee and the objectives of the participation.
7. The organising group or agency should work closely with the committee during its formation.
8. The organising group or agency should work closely with the group during the participation process

9. Use third-party facilitators to manage conflict.
10. Be forthcoming with information.
11. Use a consistently credible process.
12. Set up reporting arrangements to ensure that members communicate with their constituents via their regular communications networks (e.g. newsletters, meetings, presentations, email, or websites).
13. Record decisions and keep a running summary. This is important if new people join the group.

CITIZEN JURIES

Engagement range	Control
Difficulty level	Medium to hard (reasonable level of skill in community engagement required)
Cost	Medium to high ($1,000 - $10,000)
When might you use it:	To develop community capacity To develop action plan To communicate an issue
Number of people required to help to organise:	Depends on the audience size and level of complexity but generally will need 2-3 people to organise and help run.
Size of audience	Best suited to medium audience, 11–30 people
Timeframe	Up to 6 months)
Issues/resources to think about	Venue; Catering; Staffing; Moderator/facilitator; Overhead projectors; Data projectors; Screens; White boards; Props for working in groups (pens, paper, pins, etc.);
Innovation level	Medium to high

Description:

Citizen juries involve the wider community in the decision-making process. Participants are engaged as citizens with no formal alignments or allegiances rather than experts. Citizen juries use a representative sample of citizens (usually selected in a random or stratified manner) who are briefed in detail on the background and current thinking relating to a particular issue, and asked to discuss possible approaches, sometimes in a televised group. Citizen juries are intended to complement other forms of consultation rather than replace them. Citizens are asked to become jurors and make a judgement in the form of a report, as they would in legal juries. The issue they are asked to consider will be one that has an effect across the community and where a representative and democratic decision-making process is required.

Citizen juries can be used to broker a conflict, or to provide a transparent and non-aligned viewpoint. Citizen jurors bring with them an intrinsic worth in the good sense and wisdom born of their own knowledge and personal experience. Citizen juries provide the opportunity to add to that knowledge and to exchange ideas with their fellow citizens. The result is a collective one, in which each juror has a valuable contribution to make.

Objective:

- To draw members of the community into participative processes where the community is distanced from the decision-making process.

Desired outcome:

- A considered report with recommendations for future actions or directions.

Uses/strengths:

- Can be used to draw members of the community into participative processes where the community is distanced from the decision-making process or a process is not seen as being democratic.
- Strives to improve representation in participative processes by engaging a cross section of the community in the jury.
- Can be used to moderate divergence and provide a transparent process for decision making.
- Provides a transparent participatory process which can be seen to be independent and credible.
- Provides a public democracy mechanism.
- Provides citizens with an opportunity to develop a deep understanding of the issue.
- Involves ordinary citizens.
- Pinpoints fatal flaws or gauges public reaction and opinion.

Special considerations/weaknesses:

- Jury members need to be representative of the community in consideration.
- Setting up involves selecting jurors and experts and planning the timing, as it takes up to four days to run the jury.
- Moderators may be required, and would need to be hired.
- Everyone involved needs to be clear about the results and how they will be used. Ahead of the event, time needs to be allowed to engage jury, hire facilitator, put together briefing or background papers and contact ‘experts’.
- Allow up to four days for the jury to consider its ‘verdict’.
- The commissioning body must follow recommendations or explain why.

Step by step guide:

1. Select a broadly representative group of approximately 8-12 people. Determine a question important to the issue being considered or develop a series of options for the jury to consider.
2. Brief jurors on the rules of the proceedings, and allow them two four days to come to a recommendation.
3. Provide expert witnesses to brief the jury who can be cross-examined and who can spend time discussing the issue with the jury.
4. Engage independent moderator(s) to assist the process of deliberation.
5. At the agreed time, arrange a presentation from the panel and/or collect the jury’s report, which should outline their recommendations.
6. Publish the report and recommendations (this would normally be done by the commissioning body).
7. If the recommendations of the citizen jury are not followed up, publish the reasons for not following up (this would normally be done by the commissioning body

CIVIC JOURNALISM

Engagement range	Inform
Difficulty level	Medium to hard (reasonable level of skill in communication and media)
Cost	Medium to high ($1,000 - $10,000)
When might you use it:	To discover community issues To develop community capacity To communicate an issue
Number of people required to help to organise:	2-3 people
Size of audience	Large, depends on reach of the chosen media.
Time to organise	Short to medium (6 weeks to 6 months)
Issues/resources to think about	Local newspapers; radio stations; internet; televisions; reporters
Innovation level	Low to medium

Description:

Civic journalism sets out to provide people with detailed news and information about specific issues. Newspapers, radio and television stations and the internet combine to provide forums for citizens to question their politicians, polling the electorate to elicit the major issues and then questioning legislators.

Civic journalism is an effort to reconnect with the real concerns that viewers and readers have about the issues they care most about, not in a way that panders to them, but in a way that treats them as citizens with the responsibilities of self-government, rather than as consumers to whom goods and services are sold. Civic journalism takes the traditional five w's of journalism (who, what, when, where, why) and expands them to ask 'why is this story important to me and to the community in which I live?'

Objectives:

- To develop more democratically active citizens. Civic journalism aims to do this by providing expert comment on an issue, either in the media or by organising face-to-face public debate. In this way, civic journalism is encouraging citizens to become engaged in democratic processes, or to take some action (e.g. to reduce water use).

Desired outcome:

- Better informed citizens and more effective media coverage of issues that are more directly relevant to citizens' rights and responsibilities in civic society.

Uses/strengths:

- Can be used to raise widespread public awareness of community issues.
- Offers citizens the chance to determine what makes news in their community through polls or participation in community forums.

- Combines the power of the media to set political and social agendas with the power of individuals and groups to speak out about their issues of concern, and hence can influence the decision making process.

Special considerations/weaknesses:

- The media must decide whether to become involved to this extent.
- May pander to those who are most 'media friendly' (glamorous, articulate people) and hence may not be representative of community views.
- Outcomes will be influenced by the media's agenda.

Step by step guide:

If citizen generated:

1. Contact news agencies with case studies of civic journalism and their advantages for the news media and the community.
2. Organise focus groups, citizen juries, citizens' committees.
3. Advise local media of the opportunity to be involved.
4. Keep contact with key journalists to encourage them to treat this as a 'running story' with regular updates for the duration of the campaign or until the issue is resolved.

If news agency generated:

1. Publicise public meetings, focus groups, etc, to determine what issues are of most concern within the local area.
2. Coordinate coverage with other media (print, radio and television).
3. Invite politicians to discuss issues with citizen groups on camera.
4. Encourage citizens to develop options and publicise these options as an open forum for comment/ voting.
5. Present solutions to those who have the power to make decisions and report back on their reactions/ responses.

COMMUNITY FAIRS

Engagement range	Inform/Consult
Difficulty level	Medium to hard (reasonable level of skill in communication, media public event organising)
Cost	Medium ($1,000 - $10,000) to high (over $10,000)
When might you use it:	To showcase a product, plan, policy To discover community issues To communicate an issue
Number of people required to help to organise:	A team of people may be required (3- 12)
Size of audience	Large, depending on publicity, topic, event activities
Time to organise	Medium (6 weeks to 6 months)
Issues/resources to think about	Publicity; Venue; Catering; Staffing; Moderator/facilitator; Recorders; Artists or photographer; Events organiser; Cleaners; First aid; Other audio and visual recording and amplification; Overhead projectors; Printed public information materials; Response sheets; Data projectors; Video; Slide projector; Projection screen; Props for working in groups (pens, paper, pins, etc.); Furniture; Children's requirements; Entertainment and events; Duty of care; Insurance
Innovation level	Medium to high

Description:

A community event intended to provide project information and raise awareness about particular issues. The fair includes a multiplicity of activities and events of interest to cater for the broadest range of people (e.g. sausage sizzles, rides and activities for children, young people's activities and events of interest to adults). The events incorporated within community fairs, if focused on the main issues, will act as magnets to encourage public participation and will raise awareness on this basis.

Objective:

- To provide a fun venue that will draw a crowd of all ages and backgrounds, and then use many different ways to inform and engage the participants on a community issue.

Desired outcome:

- Raise awareness of an issue or proposal, and provide a venue for collecting contact details and getting signatories to any submissions or alternate proposals.

Uses/strengths:

- Focuses public attention on an issue.

- Can create interest from media groups and lead to increased coverage of the issue.
- Allows for different levels of information sharing.
- Builds social capital, that is, people who are more willing and able to participate in community decision making and management.

Special considerations/weaknesses:

- The public must be motivated to attend.
- Fairs can be expensive to do well.
- The project's reputation can be damaged if the fair is not done well.

Step by step guide:

1. Select a date and venue that will encourage the greatest number of participants to attend (generally weekends or public holidays). Liaise with key groups to avoid clashes.
2. Arrange for a number of activities and events of interest to various groups in the community (i.e. all ages, children, young people, adults, the elderly).
3. Provide low cost or free activities (rides, sausage sizzles, etc.) to encourage attendance.
4. Advertise and publicise the event with emphasis on the issue to be considered. Advertise starting and closing times.
5. Provide adequate staffing and consider the employment of volunteers.
6. Determine appropriate consultative activities for the fair. Organise the necessary duty of care and insurance issues.
7. Consider employment of an events manager.
8. Develop a plan of the site, and ensure all those participating know where they are to go. Consider some form of marking out sites (tape or stakes).
9. Prepare a traffic plan (for trucks, cars, etc.) including a site for parking.
10. Allow adequate time for setting up.
11. On the day, ensure that coordinators circulate to assist participants to focus on the major issue and to facilitate participation.

COMMUNITY INDICATOR

Engagement range	Partnership/Delegation/Control
Difficulty level	Medium to hard (reasonable level of skill in communication, media public event organising)
Cost	Low (less then $1,000) to Medium ($1,000 - $10,000)
When might you use it:	To develop community capacity To discover community issues To develop action plan
Number of people required to help to organise:	1-3, depends on the audience size and level of complexity
Size of audience	Medium to large
Time to organise	Medium (6 weeks to 6 months) to long (6-12 months)
Issues/resources to think about	Publicity; Venue; Catering; Staffing; Moderator/facilitator
Innovation level	Medium to high

<u>Description:</u>

Community indicator projects are those where communities have a vision for a sustainable future and have established ways of tracking their progress through the use of indicators. The list of indicators varies and is generally developed by the community itself. The technique has been used mostly in North America and Europe. The most successful projects have three characteristics in common:

- First, the community created a vision of its future that balanced economic, environmental, and social needs. This future is long-term – not in the order of years, but for decades or generations.
- Second, the vision incorporated the views of a wide cross-section of the community.
- Third, the community decided how to keep track of its progress in reaching that vision.

<u>Objective:</u>

- To measure progress toward community sustainability action plan goals.

<u>Desired outcome:</u>

- Develop a set of indicators that allow a community to keep track of its progress in reaching an agreed vision.

<u>Uses/strengths:</u>

- Can be used to educate other residents and to mobilise additional community members to join in community efforts.

- Can either precede efforts to build a community-wide initiative or be developed through a community-wide process. Both approaches are valid and serve distinctly different yet complementary purposes.
- Can still be used to inform and engage a wider cross section of the community when the set of indicators are developed by a small, non-inclusive group of concerned residents first.
- Can help generate community-wide interest reporting of change through measurement and indicators.
- May reveal data previously unknown by residents and decision-makers.
- Helps build citizens' capacity for community involvement and participation.
- Benefits from the community members' combined experience and their first-hand knowledge about their community.
- Allows monitoring of change over time.
- When it's difficult to know which are most urgent issues or will be most effective actions, a community indicator project can measure and guide the community.

Special considerations/weaknesses:

- The steps that have been chosen as indications of progress toward a goal should be relevant to the entire community.
- The community indicator project will need ongoing management.
- Indicators can be incorporated into wider statutory/legislative frameworks and this may be beyond the scope of the project and the experience of the project leaders.
- There may be difficulties in identifying and agreeing on accepted stakeholders.

Step by step guide:

1. Select a representative sample of the community.
2. Organise the appropriate method to gather people together. This may be in the form of a meeting or it may be done via phone or email.
3. Establish a vision for the future and the steps that are needed to get there (strive to balance environmental, social and economic issues in all decision-making activities).
4. Develop a set of indicators that will indicate that progress is being made – significant milestones that have made concrete and measurable progress towards the future vision.
5. Can also be developed by a small group prior to community-wide visioning and planning processes for educational purposes, and then be developed through communitywide involvement.
6. Monitor progress against indicators.
7. Publish and circulate regular progress reports through media and newsletters.

COMMUNITY PROFILING

Engagement range	Consult/Partnership
Difficulty level	Low to medium
Cost	Low (less then $1,000) to Medium ($1,000 - $10,000)
When might you use it:	To develop community capacity To discover community issues To develop action plan To communicate an issue To build alliances, consensus
Number of people required to help to organise:	1-3, depends on the audience size and level of complexity
Size of audience	Small (under 10) Medium (up to 30) Large (over 30)
Time to organise	Medium (6 weeks to 6 months) to long (6-12 months)
Issues/resources to think about	Profile Coordinator (to manage the above tasks); Social research texts; Social research advisors (to assist in development of the method); Publicity; Statistical resources (i.e. ABS Community Profiles)
Innovation level	Low to medium

<u>Description:</u>

Community (or stakeholder) profiles are a useful way of developing an understanding of the people in a geographical area or a specific community of interest. This understanding can assist in the development of a community engagement plan and influence who the key stakeholder groups are and how a project develops. Profiles can illustrate the make up of a community and could include information about the diversity within the community, their history, social and economic characteristics, how active people are (i.e. the groups and networks used) and what social and infrastructure services are provided. A community profile can also provide information on the level of interest community members may have in being actively involved in a project and their preferred method of engagement.

<u>Objectives:</u>

- To develop a more in-depth understanding of a community of interest.

<u>Desired outcome:</u>

- Projects tailored to the needs and characteristics of the people involved.

<u>Uses/strengths:</u>

- A profile is an effective way of gathering information about the diversity of a community and the potential stakeholders that may otherwise not be recorded.
- Profiles can highlight the gaps in our understanding of a community or different stakeholders and therefore guide future research.
- Profiles can encourage broader thinking about 'who' a community is and 'who' is involved in a project and 'how'.
- Profiles can help determine who is likely to be influenced by change or affected by a project.
- Developing a profile can be used as a means to develop relationships in a community/stakeholder group as the understanding is researched and developed together.
- The process of profiling can in itself raise awareness, interest and build the capacity of members in the community.
- Profiles are a means to gather community intelligence over time as projects develop and therefore this info can be easily passed on.

<u>Special considerations/weaknesses:</u>

- Community profiling is in itself an engagement activity. People involved in profiling need to be clear about why it is occurring and what will happen with the information that is collected (i.e. privacy laws).
- Communities are often complex and over time a rich and diverse picture may develop. It is important to think about how such information will be collected, managed and presented in order to prevent 'information overload'.
- Some of the most interesting questions to ask about a community can be the most expensive/time intensive to research.

<u>Step by step guide:</u>

1. Scoping
   - 1.1 What is the purpose of the community profile for the overall project?
   - 1.2 How will the community profile assist the overall project?
   - 1.3 What information needs to be in the community profile?
   - 1.4 How will the community profile information be used?
   - 1.5 Who will be involved in the development of the profile?
   - 1.6 What resources/constraints will influence the development of the profile?
2. Develop a research proposal
   - 2.1 What are the key questions to be researched by the profiler?
   - 2.2 What research approach will be taken?
   - 2.3 What methods will be used?
   - 2.4 Estimate the time/cost for development.
3. Endorsement: Who needs to endorse/support the development of the profile?
4. Research Activity
   - 4.1 How will the information be collected and recorded?
   - 4.2 How will privacy issues be managed?
5. Presentation of profile to project team/community
6. Production of profile document

6.1 Will the profile be added to over time as more understanding is developed?

6.2 Who will be responsible for the profile?

CONFERENCE

Engagement range	Inform/Consult/
Difficulty level	Medium to hard (reasonable level of skill in communication, media public event organising)
Cost	Medium ($1,000 - $10,000) to High (over $10,000)
When might you use it:	Can be used for: To showcase a product, plan, policy To discover community issues To communicate an issue
Number of people required to help to organise:	A team of people may be required (3- 12)
Size of audience	Large (over 30)
Time to organise	Medium (6 weeks to 6 months) to long (6-12 months)
Issues/resources to think about	Venue; Catering; Presenters fees (in volunteer organisations, presenters may not ask for fees); Staffing (can be a trained volunteer); Moderator/facilitator; Overhead projectors; Data projector/Video/ screen; Props for working in groups (pens, paper, pins, etc.)
Innovation level	Low

Description:

A conference is usually organised by a like-minded group or association to share information, present the latest innovations, and/or to make decisions about or on behalf of the organisation. Conferences can vary from 'shoestring' budget gatherings to large-scale, week-long events that may justify hiring a professional conference organiser. Often, conferences provide an opportunity for organisation members who are geographically scattered to gather, learn, and socialise. The venue and presenters need to suit the types of people who will be attending. That is, a camping conference may suit backpackers, but an organisation whose members have young children, or are aged, will need a venue that suits these special needs.

Objective:

- To bring a large group of people together to share information, hear the latest updates on a topic or issue, and make decisions.

Desired outcome:

- Recommendations or an action plan for future directions.

Uses/strengths:

- Can allow organisation-wide sharing and decision-making by bringing all members to one place for a day or a number of days.

- Provides networking opportunities for members of an organisation that are spread over a wide area.
- Provides a large enough audience to draw presenters of renown who may not be willing to come for a smaller gathering.
- Allows new information to be shared with a large number of people simultaneously.
- Usually provides time for serious consideration of issues over two or three days.
- Can provide an opportunity for public statements that bear the authority of coming from the collective group.

Special considerations/weaknesses:

- May take a long time from conception to welcoming delegates.
- Needs a dedicated committee for advance planning to ensure every detail is planned for.
- When deciding on timing and venue, consider other events or activities that may affect costs and availability (e.g. school holidays).
- Need good quality presenters and a suitable venue to encourage large numbers to attend.
- Need to tailor the venue and costs for inclusiveness (e.g. disabled access, childcare, cost, ambience, levels of comfort, distance from public transport) to encourage people to attend.
- Starting and registration times need to suit people travelling long distances.

Step by step guide:

1. Select a small working group to organise the event.
2. Determine what will be a suitable venue and time, taking into consideration the types of participants, their levels of ability/ agility, the kinds of activities planned, cost and transport accessibility.
3. Book the venue and catering early, and check at regular intervals in relation to staff turnovers, changes to availability of facilities, changes to numbers, events, etc.
4. Give plenty of advance notice of the date and venue through mailouts, newsletters, together with contact details for one person for inquiries.
5. Select presenters who have credibility, knowledge, and good presentation skills. Confirm all times, dates and locations in writing, and clarify what audiovisual equipment they may need, and any issues of payment.
6. Visit the venue when booking, and closer to the event, to check that all is as expected. Select knowledgeable and credible presenters, aiming for a variety of delivery styles and information.
7. Engage independent moderators to encourage equitable participation and to assist processes of decision making and deliberation preferably, have some agreed conference outcomes or actions or recommendations.
8. Consider gaining sponsorship to lighten the cost to participants.
9. Arrange all legal, financial and other responsibilities for holding a public gathering.
10. Organise a booking procedure, keep scrupulous records, and consider offering discounts for early registration.
11. Check audiovisual requirements, book and check equipment.
12. Plan carefully for the arrival of participants. If possible, trial your registration processes, catering and other facilities prior to the event.
13. Publish any reports, statements or recommendations.

14. Consider how participants will find their way to their destinations (signs, arrows, 'help desks' can all help the conference run more smoothly).
15. Use the media to publicise your event and the conference's decisions or opinions on issues. Send out media releases before the event to publicise the venue, times and speakers, and any notable events or people attending. If appropriate, organise a media conference for the end of the conference to announce the outcomes.

CONSENSUS CONFERENCE

Engagement range	Inform/Consult/Partnership
Difficulty level	Medium to hard (reasonable level of skill in communication, media public event organising)
Cost	Medium ($1,000 - $10,000) to High (over $10,000)
When might you use it:	Can be used for: To showcase a product, plan, policy To discover community issues To communicate an issue To develop community capacity To develop action plan
Number of people required to help to organise:	A team of people may be required (3- 12)
Size of audience	Large (over 30)
Time to organise	Medium (6 weeks to 6 months) to long (6-12 months)
Issues/resources to think about	Publicity; Venue/ Furniture; Catering; Moderator/facilitator/Expert; Presenters fees (in volunteer organisations, presenters may not ask for fees); Staffing; Overhead projectors; Data projector/Video/ screen; Audio and visual recording and Amplification; Artists; Photographer; Props for working in groups (pens, paper, pins, etc.); Children's requirements
Innovation level	Medium to High

Description:

A consensus conference is a public meeting, which allows ordinary citizens to be involved in assessing an issue or proposal (traditionally, this has been used in the assessment of technology). The conference is a dialogue between experts and citizens. It is open to the public and the media. Developed in Denmark, there it is usually attended by members of the Danish Parliament. The citizen panel plays the leading role, formulating questions to be taken up at the conference, and participating in the selection of experts to answer them. The panel has two weekends for this preparation. The expert panel is selected in a way that ensures that essential opposing views and professional conflicts can emerge and be discussed at the conference. An advisory/planning committee has the overall responsibility of making sure that all rules of a democratic, fair and transparent process have been followed. Consensus conferences have mostly been used where the topic being investigated concerns management, science or technology. They require a strict adherence to the rules of implementation to be successful. Where members of the community feel their views go unheard, the consensus conference offers an exciting participatory technique for democratic participation.

Objective:

- To give members of the community a chance to have their say on community issues, to increase their knowledge of and ability to participate in such a discussion, and to come to one position statement that all participants can 'own'.

Desired outcome:

- A position statement that reflects the joint decision(s) of all participants on an issue or proposal.

Uses/strengths:

- Assists in the facilitation of public debate from a range of perspectives.
- Empowers lay people to develop an informed understanding and make some contribution to the development of policy on a sensitive topic.
- Demonstrates a plurality of views on issues.
- Bridges the gap between experts and lay people.
- Can develop new knowledge.

Special considerations/weaknesses:

- High costs for set up and recruitment of participants and staging the event.
- The conference would run for a two – four day period and therefore resources will be costly.
- The process of panellist selection can be difficult. Stakeholders' analysis must be undertaken to predetermine who are the relevant groups. This will ensure that representation from the relevant groups is achieved.
- Need to draw citizens for panels that are representative and from a wide range of backgrounds rather than members of the community who are usually present in participatory processes.
- Strict adherence to the rules of implementation is required for the conference to be successful.
- The formal nature of the tool can restrict impartiality.
- Rapid production of reports and findings is required.
- Choice of an effective facilitator is critical to the success of the conference.

Step by step guide:

Select an advisory/planning committee to have the overall responsibility of making sure that all rules of a democratic, fair and transparent process have been followed. The committees should then:

1. Organise a public meeting and advertise the venue, time and topic to the public, experts in the field to be discussed, the media and appropriate decision-making bodies.
2. Select participants for the citizen panel, ensuring a representative sample of the geographic area and/ or relevant community groups (about 14 people).
3. Hire a professional facilitator to work with the citizen panel during its preparation.
4. Book suitable venues for the citizen panel to meet over two weekends to work with a facilitator to formulate the questions to be taken up at the conference, and to participate in the selection of experts to answer them.

5. With the help of the citizen panel, select the expert panel in a way that ensures that essential opposing views and professional conflicts can emerge and be discussed at the conference. Good experts are not only knowledgeable but also open minded and good communicators with an over-view of their field.
6. Hold a formal conference (two-four days) at which:
   6.1 Panellists hear experts' responses to questions.
   6.2 After hearing these responses, panellists can ask follow up questions.
   6.3 The audience is given opportunity to ask questions.
   6.4 The panel deliberates and prepares a position statement to achieve consensus on the issue.
   6.5 Panellists present outcomes
   6.6 Planning committee prepares a report of the outcomes and distributes to panellists, media and decision making bodies.

DELIBERATIVE OPINION POLLS

Engagement range	Inform/Consult
Difficulty level	Medium to hard (reasonable level of skill in communication, media public event organising)
Cost	Medium ($1,000 - $10,000) to High (over $10,000)
When might you use it:	Can be used for: To discover community issues To communicate an issue To develop community capacity
Number of people required to help to organise:	A team of people may be required (3- 12)
Size of audience	Medium (up to 20) to Large (over 30)
Time to organise	Medium (6 weeks to 6 months) to long (6-12 months)
Issues/resources to think about	Staff and telephones; Briefing papers; Expert knowledge
Innovation level	Medium

Description:

Deliberative Opinion Polls (DOPs) measure informed opinion on an issue. Compared to ordinary opinion polls, DOPs differ in that participants are informed via briefing notes and access to experts (these may include politicians) on a particular issue and have time to consider the issue in detail, whereas participants in ordinary opinion polls do not have the opportunity to learn about the issue being measured and may know little about the issue.

Objective:

- To develop well-informed core group representatives, who have been privy to good quality information and who can take this information back to share within the community.

Desired outcome::

- A report which reflects informed public opinion on an issue or proposal. Such reports may then be distributed to the wider community via the popular media.

Uses/strengths:

- The DOP uses a random sample of the population so that the results can be extrapolated to the community as a whole. The DOP advises decision makers and the media what the public would think if they had enough time to consider the issue properly.

Special considerations/weaknesses:

- DOPs involve a large number of participants (between 250 and 600), therefore set-up costs are high.

- Informing the participants normally requires access to experts in a number of fields of knowledge.
- Speakers need to be organised.
- With so many participants' opinions, managing data is a significant undertaking.
- Organising and running the event can be time consuming.
- Organisers need to allow time to select participants, undertake an initial opinion poll, allow two to four days for the deliberation process, and then allow time for another poll, and formulating the report.

Step by step guide:

1. Determine a random sample of the population, so that participants are representative of the wider groups in the community.
2. Conduct baseline survey of opinion.
3. Contact experts and politicians who may be required to inform the participants on specific aspects of the issue.
4. Brief participants and dispatch written information.
5. Give participants two-four days to compose questions and engage politicians and experts in plenary discussions.
6. Record views on a particular issue before the poll begins and again at the completion of the poll.
7. Changes in opinion are measured and incorporated into a report.
8. DOPs are often conducted in conjunction with television/media companies.

DISPLAYS AND EXHIBITS

Engagement range	Inform/Consult
Difficulty level	Medium to hard (reasonable level of skill in communication, media public event organising)
Cost	Medium (\$1,000 - \$10,000) to High (over \$10,000)
When might you use it:	Can be used for: To showcase product, plan, policy To discover community issues To communicate an issue To develop community capacity
Number of people required to help to organise:	A team of people may be required (3- 12)
Size of audience	Large (over 30)
Time to organise	Medium (6 weeks to 6 months) to long (6-12 months)
Issues/resources to think about	Staff and telephones; Briefing papers; Expert knowledge Publicity; Venue rental; Staffing; Audio/visual equipment; Artists; Photographers; Events organiser; Cleaners; First aid; Overhead projectors; Printed public information materials; Response sheets; Props for working in groups (pens, paper, pins, etc.); Furniture; Children's requirements Duty of care Insurance
Innovation level	Low to Medium

<u>Description:</u>

A community event intended to provide project information and raise awareness about particular issues. Displays can be interactive, and can be used as part of a forum, workshop, exhibition, conference or other event. Displays and exhibits can include feedback opportunities such as blank sheets with one-line questions, and can include drawings, models, posters, or other visual and audio representations relevant to community issues and interests. Interactive displays can include 'post-it' ideas boards, maps for people to make their most and least favourite buildings or spaces, and flip charts or blank posters for comments and questions.

<u>Objective:</u>

- To inform the community, and to help to engage community members in the process of planning and decision making about an event, proposal or issue.

<u>Desired outcome:</u>

- Displays and exhibits develop more concrete concepts of proposals or developments, and, where these provide options for interaction, provide public opinions and feedback that can be incorporated into the planning and decision making process.

Uses/strengths:

- Focuses public attention on an issue.
- Can create interest from media groups and lead to increased coverage of the issue.
- Allows for different levels of information sharing.
- Provides a snapshot of opinions and community issues based on feedback.

Special considerations/weaknesses:

- Public must be motivated to attend.
- Needs a facilitator to encourage involvement and written feedback.
- Can damage the project's reputation if not done well.

Step by step guide:

1. Select a date and venue that will encourage the greatest number of participants to attend (generally weekends or public holidays/ shopping centres or malls/public spaces).
2. Arrange for a number of displays/ exhibits to give details of the event/ issue.
3. Place the display/exhibit in a well populated public space where those most affected by the issue/event are likely to pass by.
4. Advertise and publicise the event with emphasis on the issue to be considered. Advertise times when display/exhibit will be open.
5. Provide adequate staffing and consider the employment of volunteers.
6. Consider duty of care and insurance issues.
7. Allow adequate time for setting up.
8. On the day, ensure that coordinators circulate to facilitate participation and answer questions.
9. Collate feedback and publish results.

ELECTRONIC DEMOCRACY

Engagement range	Inform/Consult
Difficulty level	Easy
Cost	Medium ($1,000 - $10,000) to High (over $10,000)
When might you use it:	Can be used for: To showcase product, plan, policy To discover community issues To communicate an issue To develop community capacity
Number of people required to help to organise:	1-3, depends on the audience size and level of complexity
Time to organise	Medium (6 weeks to 6 months) to long (6-12 months)
Size of audience	Large (over 30)
Issues/resources to think about	Commercial and not-for-profit online service providers; Public library online facilities; Private online facilities, including internet; Volunteers with technical knowledge and understanding
Innovation level	Low to Medium

Description:

Electronic democracy seeks to embrace existing and emergent media sources as a forum for allowing members of the public to express opinions and seek to influence decision-making within their community, state, country, or globally. Media sources that may be used for the processes of democracy include television and radio, but the internet is the main way that electronic democracy can be seen in action. While electronic democracy is more an ideal than a reality, electronic democracy is generally discussed in theoretical terms. Participation using the internet through email, online voting and access to information on websites are widely used participatory tools. People can use email or websites to register their opinions on proposed developments, on environmental impact statements, and so on. Television and radio stations can set up websites that record listener voting on issues, or to register the major community issues for a particular demographic of the community. These findings can then be reported as a measure of community attitudes and issues, increasing the chance that these opinions will be taken into account in government or industry's planning and decision-making processes. Community groups can also develop electronic democracy projects using commercial or not-for-profit on-line servers to develop the technical information infrastructure needed to set up web pages, email list administration, etc.

Objective:

- To engage more members of the public in expressing their opinions on a website, via email, or through other electronic communications options, in order to influence planning and decision-making.

Desired outcome:

- Increased number and diversity of people who exercise their democratic rights through comments sent to decision-making bodies with regard to proposals and issues.

Uses/strengths:

- Creates a virtual public space where people can interact, discuss issues and share ideas.
- Allows citizens to participate at their own convenience.
- Can reach a potentially large audience readily.
- Facilitates interactive communication.
- Costs little to set up.
- Disseminates large amounts of information effectively and without distortion.

Special considerations/weaknesses:

- May exclude participation by those not online.
- Results can be manipulated therefore results of polls should be carefully considered.
- Needs a core group of dedicated volunteers (5-15 depending on the scope and scale of activities).
- People can become disillusioned if the project is 'over-hyped'. Keep expectations realistic.
- Encouraging electronic conferencing among participants in an interactive forum ensures that the project moves beyond broadcast to build an on-line, participatory open space.
- Email lists with many active subscribers generate so much information that they drive people away.

Step by step guide:

1. Set up a core group of volunteers/ participants interested in developing e-democracy, seeking people with a diverse mix of skills and experience.
2. Explore and use existing opportunities for contributing individual and group opinions on, or information about, specific issues including feedback on websites, tele-voting, on-line dialogues, and using the feedback options on online government services. Provide search engines with sufficient data (from broad categories such as 'offshore fishing' to specific categories such as the name of the area (e.g. 'Bateman's Bay') to see what other information/opportunities are available).
3. Set up your own website providing information about your organisation, links to other sites that may provide background information.
4. Develop a clear and concise mission or purpose statement to form the basis of public interest and awareness through wide distribution.
5. Keep your site well organised and up to date. Use standard HTML formatting to make the site as inclusive as possible.
6. Provide details of subscribe/ unsubscribe procedures.
7. Include new email contact details in your public email lists so that you can report up-to-date information those who have registered an interest, and also invite them to add their signatures to submissions, alternate proposals, etc.
8. Set up your own on-line dialogue through your website. Counting the number of people who visit the site can provide useful data for authorities who need to know how many people are concerned, or what kinds of issues are of concern to the community.

9. Investigate whether government news groups offer newsgroup space for local electronic democracy projects. Newsgroups provide the core of information exchange and global topical discussions.
10. Don’t forget to let the traditional media know about your e-democracy project. An article in the news (radio, television or print) will let people know of your project and its address.

EXPERT PANEL

Engagement range	Inform/Consult/partnership
Difficulty level	Medium to hard (reasonable level of skill in communication, media public event organising)
Cost	Medium ($1,000 - $10,000) to High (over $10,000)
When might you use it:	Can be used for: To showcase product, plan, policy To discover community issues To communicate an issue To develop community capacity To develop an action plan To build alliance, consensus
Number of people required to help to organise:	1-3, depends on the audience size and level of complexity
Time to organise	Medium (6 weeks to 6 months)
Size of audience	Medium (11-30)
Issues/resources to think about	Publicity; Venue; Catering; Staffing; Moderator/facilitator; Audio and visual recording and amplification; Overhead projector; Data projector/screen; Furniture; Children's requirements
Innovation level	Medium to high

Description:

Expert panels are engaged when highly specialised input and opinion is required for a project. Generally, a variety of experts are engaged based on various fields of expertise to debate and discuss various courses of action and make recommendations. Expert panels are not as interactive as Fishbowls (where expert panels are seen as the fish in the bowls). They are used often when the issue is highly contentious and decisions are likely to have possible legal ramifications or where the best possible results (based on expertise) are required.

Objective:

- To hear a variety of informed (expert) viewpoints from which to decide on recommendations or courses of action in relation to an issue or proposal.

Desired outcome:

- A series of recommendations on a proposal or community environmental issue. Such recommendations or proposals can then be forwarded to decision making bodies.

Uses/strengths:

- Useful when an issue is complex and contentious.

- Useful where conflict exists to provide opinions which may have more credibility, and hence may assist in resolving the conflict.
- Useful when a variety of opinions are present, to provide a credible alternative opinion, based on credible expertise.
- Useful when the possibility of legal ramifications is present, as the experts' report or opinions may carry weight in any future court case.

Special considerations/weaknesses:

- Experts can be expensive.
- A long lead time may be needed to book appropriate experts.
- Format of the panel must encourage participation and dialogue between all panellists.
- Generally, this is used at the conclusion of participatory program where all available information has been considered.
- Public input may not be available.
- Used mostly where specialised knowledge is required rather than public opinion.
- A highly skilled moderator is required.
- Expertise in relevant and complementary areas will be needed to produce an 'expert opinion' which will be credible with the public, and which can be drawn on in the case of legal action.

Step by step guide:

1. Select panellists on the basis of expertise, ensuring issues/groups of relevance are represented.
2. Allow time for contacting experts for the panel, and negotiating a mutually suitable time. For very busy people, this can mean planning some months in advance.
3. Employ a skilled and unbiased moderator.
4. Provide background briefing information to panellists.
5. Determine ground rules for the panel.
6. Allow public input if possible and appropriate.
7. Determine course of action.
8. Present the outcomes of the panel discussions.

FIELD TRIPS

Engagement range	Inform/Consult/
Difficulty level	Medium to hard (reasonable level of skill in communication, media public event organising)
Cost	Low (up to $1,000) to Medium ($1,000 - $10,000)
When might you use it:	Can be used for: To showcase product, plan, policy To discover community issues
Number of people required to help to organise:	1-3, depends on the audience size and level of complexity
Time to organise	Medium (6 weeks to 6 months) to long (6-12 months)
Size of audience	Medium (11-30) to large (over 30)
Issues/resources to think about	Publicity; Venue; Catering; Staffing; Moderator/facilitator; Audio and visual recording and amplification; Overhead projector; Data projector/screen; Photographer Furniture; Printed public information materials; Response sheets; Entertainment and events; Children's requirements; Duty of care; Insurance
Innovation level	Low to medium

Description:

Field trips are organised trips where participants visit physical sites. They are a venue for providing information and at times, opportunities for participant input. Public input is possible when other participative activities are combined with the field trip. A popular technique for environmental, planning and design-related participation processes, field trips are especially useful as a complement to conference presentations, or when written work such as reports are inappropriate.

Objective:

- To allow people to 'see for themselves' the place where a development is proposed to be placed, or to have a demonstration of a technique (e.g. water quality testing) in the environment where the technique can be tried, and where it is most able to be seen, remembered, and understood.

Desired outcome:

- An understanding about a place and/or practice that allows them to incorporate a new method into their practice, or to provide informed opinions on a proposal or issue.

Uses/strengths:

- Used when the issue being considered has a geographic focus.
- Used when a large number of stakeholders are involved in the process.

- Used where participants require information or education and these are best provided or explained on-site.
- Used when a demonstration will be more effective than presentations.
- Adds transparency and education to the process of participation.
- Provides opportunity for rapport with key stakeholders.
- Creates greater public knowledge of issues and processes.

Special considerations/weaknesses:

- Costly if a large number of experts are engaged to present on site.
- Larger numbers of participants require large number of staff/facilitators.
- Number of participants is limited by logistics.
- Potentially attractive to protesters.

Step by step guide:

1. Publicise the field trip.
2. Select times that suit the largest number of participants (e.g. select from after hours for full-time workers, daytime for retirees or parents with small children).
3. Field trips can run from several hours to full days to allow the greatest number of participants to attend (depending on the time participants can spare, distance to be travelled, availability of expertise and/or case studies).
4. Advertise the agenda and times of key presentations in appropriate place (e.g. local media, posters at local stores and libraries). This will allow participants to attend for shorter periods if necessary, and will allow them to choose sessions of interest.
5. Ensure adequate staff on site to provide assistance. For example, give directions, be available for first aid, organise food and drink (set-up and clean away), etc.
6. Create and display signs that publicise the location of field trip through attachment of maps/directions with a pre-posted agenda.
7. Ensure all publicity (signs, media releases, brochures) provide directions from major routes near the site.
8. Allow time for participants to approach experts for one-to-one discussions.
9. Provide printed public information materials during the field trip for interested participants.
10. Appoint staff to act as note takers during the discussions.
11. Provide feedback forms/survey/ response sheets to facilitate public input.
12. Pay attention to duty of care/safety issues. If site is difficult to access or contains elements of risk, make necessary preparations to avoid accidents with an emphasis on participants with disabilities.
13. Organise catering if appropriate.
14. Ensure toilets are available.

FOCUS GROUPS

Engagement range	Consult
Difficulty level	Medium (some previous group consultation needed)
Cost	Low (up to $1,000)
When might you use it:	Can be used for: To showcase product, plan, policy To discover community issues
Number of people required to help to organise:	1-3, depends on the audience size and level of complexity
Time to organise	Medium (6 weeks to 6 months)
Size of audience	Small (up to 11) Medium (11-30)
Issues/resources to think about	Venue; Catering; Moderator/facilitator; Audio and visual recording; Overhead projector; Data projector/screen; Response sheets; Depending on age group, may require child care.
Innovation level	Low to medium

Description:

Focus groups are used for exploratory studies, and the issues that emerge from the focus group may be developed into a questionnaire or other form of survey to verify the findings. Relatively inexpensive, focus groups can provide fairly dependable data within a short time frame. Focus groups are a technique used to find out what issues are of most concern for a community or group when little or no information is available. They allow people to answer questions, but also to bounce ideas off one another, and hence provide more detailed information as people share and elaborate on their issues. Where large-scale objective information is needed, a minimum of four focus groups and as many as 12 may be needed to collect all the information needed. Using independent researchers to run groups and analyse data will ensure objectivity for organisations which need to maintain transparent processes.

Objectives:

- To discover the key issues of concern for selected groups.
- To determine what are the concerns that would prevent a proposal going ahead
- To identify the issues that are of concern to a group or community.

Desired outcome:

- Detailed knowledge of the issues that concern a specific group or community.

Uses/strengths:

- Highly applicable when a new proposal is mooted and little is known of community opinions.
- Can be used to develop a preliminary concept of the issues of concern, from which a wider community survey may be undertaken.
- Can be used for limited generalisations based on the information generated by the focus group.
- Particularly good for identifying the reasons behind people's likes/dislikes.
- Produces ideas that would not emerge from surveys/questionnaires, because the focus group allows opportunity for a wider range of comments.

Special considerations/weaknesses:

- Such small groups may not be representative of the community response to an issue.
- May be confronting for some to be open about their opinions depending on how well people know one another.
- People must be able to operate within their comfort zones.
- Requires careful selection to be a representative sample (similar age range, status, etc.).
- Skilled facilitators should be hired.

Step by step guide:

1. Randomly select 6–10 people affected by or interested in the community issue to make up the focus group.
2. Book venue and arrange catering if meeting goes across a meal time.
3. Hire a facilitator.
4. Prepare preliminary questions.
5. Send reminders to participant with time, date, venue and questions.
6. Brief participants and the facilitator on the aims and objectives of the session.
7. Establish ground rules: keep focused, maintain momentum, get closure on questions.
8. Encourage shy participants if they feel anxious about revealing their opinions/feelings.
9. Engage a co-facilitator to record issues raised by individuals (may use audio, a/visual, and/or written notes).
10. De-brief the participants and the facilitator.
11. Compile a report of proceedings for the organisers, and offer a copy to the participants.

FUTURE SEARCH CONFERENCE

Engagement range	Partnership/Delegate/Control
Difficulty level	Medium to Hard (some previous group consultation needed)
Cost	Medium ($1,000to $10,000) to High (over $10,000)
When might you use it:	Can be used for: To showcase product, plan, policy To discover community issues To develop community capacity To develop action plan To communicate an issue To build alliances, consensus
Number of people required to help to organise:	1-3, depends on the audience size and level of complexity
Time to organise	Medium (6 weeks to 6 months)
Size of audience	Medium (11-30) Large (over 30)
Issues/resources to think about	Publicity; Venue; Catering; Moderator/facilitator; Audio and visual recording; Overhead projector; Data projector/screen; Response sheets; Artists; Photographer; Props for working in groups (pens, paper, pins, etc.); Furniture; Children's requirements.
Innovation level	Medium to High

Description:

A two-day meeting where participants attempt to create a shared community vision of the future. It attempts to bring together those with the power to make decisions with those affected by the decisions to try to agree on a plan of action. The future search conference can also be used to focus on the future of an organisation, a network of people or a community. Participants are encouraged to explore the past, present and future and make action plans based on common ground.

Objective:

- To develop a series of options for the future, and agree on a plan of action, which, because participants include those with the power to make it happen as well as those who will be affected, should be able to be implemented.

Desired outcome:

- A feasible work plan towards a future vision which incorporates the needs and wishes of those affected as well as those of the decision making agencies or departments.

Uses/strengths:

- The search conference is useful in identifying issues at the early stages of a project or process.
- It assists in identifying key or priority issues.
- Can provide guidance on how the participation process should be run.
- Can provide advice on who to involve in the participation process and gain support for ongoing involvement.
- Can empower individuals to become better informed, and better able to express their opinions.
- Useful when participation of large groups is desirable and an open forum is sought.

Special considerations/weaknesses:

- Can be logistically challenging given the number of potential participants.
- Requires the engagement of an experienced facilitator to be successful.
- Can be difficult to gain complete commitment (to attend or to agree on outcomes) from all participants.
- Large time frame (two - three days) may affect the availability of volunteers/participants.

Step by step guide:

1. Canvas people to be invited to be part of the future search.
2. Book venue.
3. Hire a facilitator.
4. Advertise event.
5. Brief participants and the facilitator on the aims and objectives of the session.
6. Provide a background briefing for participants if required.
7. Conduct discussion. One methodology for conducting the discussion is outlined by Emery, a pioneer of the technique, who identifies five stages to the process:
   7.1 External environment: 'the futures we are currently in' are described by the participants.
   7.2 Desirable futures: groups construct a list of desirable futures that build upon the current situation.
   7.3 Desirable futures are transmitted into more explicit pictures.
   7.4 Testing desirable futures against the reality of the current situation and the criteria generated earlier in the meeting.
   7.5 Discussing the implementation of the desirable future, based on current circumstances and resources.
8. Record issues raised by individuals and report back in the plenary sessions.
9. Compile a report of proceedings.

INFORMATION HOTLINE

Engagement range	Inform
Difficulty level	Medium
Cost	Medium ($1,000to $10,000)
When might you use it:	Can be used for: To showcase product, plan, policy To discover community issues To communicate an issue
Number of people required to help to organise:	A team of people may be required (3- 12)
Time to organise	Medium (6 weeks to 6 months)
Size of audience	Large (over 30)
Issues/resources to think about	Staff; Comfortable workroom with desks, telephones, and computer access for recording contacts, tracking updated information, and contacting expert; sources; Polite, brief, up-to-date recorded; message giving details of the project, proposal or issue, and inviting further enquiries; detail about where to go for further information.
Innovation level	Low

Description:

An information hotline offers pre-recorded information on a project via the telephone and/or access to project team staff members who can answer questions or provide additional information and assistance.

Objective:

- To deliver accurate, consistent information over the telephone to those who wish or need to know about an issue or event.

Desired outcome:

- Can ensure that those who need to know are informed quickly, easily and efficiently (e.g. at times of a natural disaster when relatives want to know the whereabouts and safety of their family members).

Uses/strengths:

- Offers an inexpensive and simple device for publicity, information and public input.
- Provides a good service to the public by preventing people ‘doing the run around’ to access project information.
- Can serve as a link between the citizens and the municipality’s government.
- It is easy to provide updates on project activities.

- Can describe ways the community can become involved.
- Can offer a report-in point for volunteers who act as extra observers in reporting on events (e.g. pollution, litter, beached whales, etc).
- Offers a reasonably low-cost for set up and updates.
- Portrays an image of ‘accessibility’ for an organisation, department or group.
- Can be an avenue for citizens to feel more involved in their community.
- It also can be a great way to catch illegal polluters or to stop accidental spills that might otherwise go unnoticed (e.g. people may feel more comfortable to ‘dob in’ a polluter when they are speaking to the people responsible for monitoring such activities via the relatively anonymous hotline, whereas they would not do this in person, or if they had to write a letter).

Special considerations/weaknesses:

- Must be adequately advertised to be successful.
- If staffed by volunteers, can be time consuming.
- Works best if you can afford to set up an easy-to-remember phone number.
- Designated contact must have sufficient knowledge of the project to be able to answer questions quickly and accurately.
- May limit a project officer from performing other tasks.

Step by step guide:

1. Determine the information to be recorded and timetable of updates to the service (if applicable).
2. Plan for advertising the number, which may include having stationery and flyers printed, or a stamp with the hotline number that can be stamped onto all outgoing printed correspondence or promotional material.
3. Set up a hotline number for callers by recording message and hooking up to the phone line. Record information that will answer the most commonly asked questions.
4. Set up a toll free number for non-local callers.
5. Advertise the number in the media, and ensure it is on all your outreach material.
6. Offer the option of being put through to a specific person for more details.
7. Appoint staff to answer questions.
8. Brief and train the person nominated to ensure they can access all information, have contact details of who to ask for information on specific aspects of the project, and have a pleasant telephone manner, even with difficult callers.
9. Record calls/common complaints/concerns in telephone journal for your records and input to the participation process.

INFORMATION BANK

Engagement range	Inform
Difficulty level	Medium
Cost	Medium ($1,000to $10,000)
When might you use it:	Can be used for: To showcase product, plan, policy To communicate an issue
Number of people required to help to organise:	1-3, depends on the audience size and level of complexity
Time to organise	Medium (6 weeks to 6 months)
Size of audience	Large (over 30)
Issues/resources to think about	Publicity: Venue with good storage and display areas and room to access material (corrals or tables and chairs); Staff
Innovation level	Low

Description:

Information banks are formed when project information is stored in a centralised public place where members of the community can access the information. Popular places for information banks include public libraries, schools, city halls and Council offices. Typically, the information bank should house all the project information appropriate for public access and act as a dispatch centre for project information.

Objective:

- To provide one central, well-advertised venue (or a specific number of venues) at which all information about an event, historical study, or proposal can be accessed.

Desired outcome:

- Members of the community can gain information on a wide range of aspects of an issue, event or proposal.

Uses/strengths:

- Where a large quantity of project information is being generated, the information bank is useful in limiting the need for multiple copies (similar to libraries).
- Information banks can double as distribution centres for project information.
- Can illustrate the levels on interest in a project, and who is using the material, if log of users is kept through a ‘sign-in’ system.

Special considerations/weaknesses:

- Generally not well used by the public, if not in an easily accessible, well publicised location.

- Staff at the information bank must know the location of the materials and be able to answer basic project questions.

Step by step guide:

1. Select materials suitable for the information bank.
2. Select a suitable location that is centralised, accessible by public transport, and set up in a way that will allow the material to be easily used.
3. Publicise and existence of the information bank through a range of publicity techniques.
4. Reiterate the existence of the information bank at public consultation sessions.
5. Staffing: staff require basic library skills, interpersonal skills and the knowledge and ability to answer basic project questions (can use existing staff if housing repository in a public library or staffed space).
6. Maintain a log of visitors.
7. Consistently add information to the information bank.
8. Maintain for the duration of the project.
9. Use as distribution centre for project information.

INTERACTIVE VIDEO DISPLAY KIOSKS

Engagement range	Inform
Difficulty level	Medium to hard (some specialist skills and technical prowess required)
Cost	Medium ($1,000to $10,000)
When might you use it:	Can be used for: To showcase product, plan, policy To communicate an issue To develop community capacity
Number of people required to help to organise:	A team of people may be required (3- 12)
Time to organise	Medium (6 weeks to 6 months) to long (over 6 months)
Size of audience	Large (over 30)
Issues/resources to think about	Sophisticated hardware and software; Expert programmers to set up interactive display and keep updated/ troubleshoot and repair; Technicians to install near ISDN or cable connections; Regular policing to prevent vandalism.
Innovation level	Low

Description:

Stand alone kiosks that present a large amount of information using a computer and touch screen/mouse for navigation through the information located within the kiosk. Interactive video displays and kiosks are similar to automatic teller machines, offering menus for interaction between a person and a computer. Information is provided through a presentation that invites viewers to ask questions or direct the flow of information. Viewers activate programs by using a touch-screen, keys, a mouse, or a trackball. Software used in interactive video displays and kiosks is highly specialized, storing information on CD-ROM or floppy disks that allow retrieval of specific information based on directions from the viewer. By contrast, hardware requirements are fairly minimal, requiring relatively simple computer equipment

Objective:

- To deliver information via a multimedia presentation. This media is suitable for those not able to read the language, those who prefer visual as well as verbal cues, and is one that appeals to all age groups.

Desired outcome:

- Provide a multimedia option for finding information about an event, issue or proposal, through a 'click and find' process, rather than having to scroll through a great deal of information to find just what is wanted.

Uses/strengths:

- Can elicit preferences from people who do not otherwise participate.
- Complement staff availability.
- Can provide printed messages.
- Provide information from an agency to the public.
- Collect information from the public for agency analysis.
- Offers agencies flexibility in controlling and directing where a message goes.
- If well sited, can reach people who do not normally attend hearings or meetings.
- Deliver information to the user.
- Offers a variety of issues to explore, images to view, and topics to consider.
- Elicit specific responses, acting as a survey instrument.
- Enables the user to enter a special request to the sponsoring agency or join a mailing list.
- Are used in a variety of locations and may be either stationary or mobile.
- Allows a great deal more information to be made available and can be developed similarly to web pages and navigated in a similar way. Therefore, a lot more information can be made available through kiosks than stand alone displays.

Special considerations/weaknesses:

- Sophisticated information programs make interactive displays expensive.
- Takes time to set up (one year for planning, fundraising and setting up).
- After construction and installation, staff commitments are relatively limited.
- Any new technology involving machines may cause unease.
- Software purchase is a high up-front cost.
- Maintenance costs are incurred.
- Potential vandalism is a factor in site selection.
- Liability issues may be associated with location of displays.
- Strategic sighting of interactive programs is imperative. They should be located where large numbers of people frequent.

Step by step guide:

1. Conduct local meetings to determine whether interactive video would be a viable option for your community. The interactive video network might serve a number of community needs, such as teaching shortages in rural communities, and as well build the community's capacity to participate in decision making in relation to issues of community concern.
2. Contact communications providers and government agencies for funding and sponsorship for the project (e.g. telecommunications companies may lay fibre optics as part of their community service obligations). Sponsorship is more likely if a number of agencies can present a case for using the systems (e.g. Natural Resources and Education Departments).
3. In setting up displays on a community issue, present materials in ways that are simple, graphically interesting, and easily understood.
4. Develop material in similar ways to web pages, so they can be navigated in a similar way.
5. Seek limited public input through the inclusion of electronic surveys, however manipulation is a possibility and results should be regarded with care.

6. Specialist software and industrial designers are required.

KEY STAKEHOLDER INTERVIEWS

Engagement range	Consult
Difficulty level	Medium
Cost	Medium ($1,000to $10,000)
When might you use it:	Can be used for: To communicate an issue To build alliances, consensus
Number of people required to help to organise:	1-3, depends on the audience size and level of complexity
Time to organise	Medium (6 weeks to 6 months
Size of audience	Small (up to 10) Medium (11-30)
Issues/resources to think about	Trained interviewers; Recording methods (may be audio, hand-written or computer aided records, but should be unobtrusive, so the focus is on the content and conversation); May need a professional typist to transcribe tapes and hand-written notes, as this is time consuming.
Innovation level	Medium to high

Description:

Interviews with key stakeholders with expertise relevant to a particular community issue are lengthy, one to one interviews that may last an hour or two, and require specialist skill to use the time effectively, and to elicit relevant and specific information. The interviewer should be able to gain insights from a 'casual' conversation so the person being interviewed does not get too narrow in addressing a single point (unless you want a lot of information about a specific issue). This interviewing technique is like the technique in focus groups, because you can keep asking questions until you get a satisfactory response. These are expensive and hard to do well, but they are very good sources of information and are especially useful when it is important to understand the views of certain people (because of their position or their expertise).

Objective:

- To elicit detailed information and opinions on an issue through wide-ranging discussion rather than specific questioning.

Desired outcome:

- A broad overview of the interviewees' opinions about a specific topic that may reveal hidden concerns or ideas that would not be expressed in response to a set number of specific questions.

Uses/strengths:

- Useful for targeting key stakeholders who have specific knowledge about an issue.

- Provides opportunity to get understanding of concerns and issues of key stakeholders.
- Can be used to determine how best to communicate with the public.
- Can be used to determine the best members of consultative committees.

Special considerations/weaknesses:

- Can be expensive.
- Can be time consuming.
- Interviewers must engender trust or risk negative response to the format.
- Requires skilled interviewers.

Step by step guide:

1. Select interviewees according to designated criteria (areas of expertise, representation of groups, complementary of skills for committees).
2. Arrange times and places for interviewing. Better quality information will be forthcoming if the interviewee is in a familiar setting, so it may be easier for the interviewer to go to them.
3. Ensure uninterrupted time for at least one hour.
4. Check all equipment and take spare tapes, batteries, pens, etc. to avoid any interruptions during the interview.

KITCHEN TABLE DISCUSSION

Engagement range	Consult/Partnership
Difficulty level	Easy to Medium
Cost	Low (up to $1,000) to Medium ($1,000to $10,000)
When might you use it:	To communicate an issue To build alliances, consensus To showcase product, plan, policy To discover community issues To develop community capacity To develop action plan
Number of people required to help to organise:	1-3, depends on the audience size and level of complexity
Time to organise	Medium (6 weeks to 6 months) to Long (over 6 months)
Size of audience	Small (up to 10)
Issues/resources to think about	Venue; Catering; Staffing; Facilitator; Children' s requirements (e.g. child minding)
Innovation level	Low to Medium

Description:

Small meetings within the neighbourhood, usually at someone's home or a local coffee shop. These settings make the meeting informal and participants tend to respond to the more relaxed surrounds. Because they are informal, participants generally are more willing to discuss issues and dialogue is maximised. A kitchen table discussion group is a small collection of people who get together in someone's home to talk, listen and share ideas on subjects of mutual interest. The host often begins by reminding everyone that there are no right or wrong ideas, and that everyone's contribution is valuable. The host also encourages people to listen, to ask clarifying questions, and to avoid arguing or interrupting. Kitchen table discussion groups can be a prime vehicle for social change. Kitchen table discussions are now going 'online', and are being held around virtual kitchen tables where anyone can join in to discuss an issue (see Electronic Democracy).

Objective:

- To encourage people to continue discussing an issue until all members have had a chance to be heard, and provide an opportunity of sharing not only opinions, but information and alternatives for community proposals or issues.

Desired outcome:

- A sense of community, and may generate feedback and submissions on community issues and proposals.

Uses/strengths:

- Maximises two-way dialogue.
- If issue is likely to be contentious, provides an ideal setting to scope for early conflicts.
- Maximises the likelihood of engagement in debate and allays likelihood of conflict because held in 'neutral turf' setting.
- Builds social networks within the community.

<u>Special considerations/weaknesses:</u>

- Needs organisers/facilitators who are polite and relaxed.
- Requires creativity and resource investigation to reach a large number of people.
- Needs a diversity of interests to be invited.
- Best for small group discussions (8-10 people).

<u>Step by step guide:</u>

1. If a kitchen table discussion arises informally, those who wish to follow up on this opportunity should seek advice on how best to encourage participation and how to handle the issues/information that arises. The informal beginnings can be discouraged if the person or people organising further discussions do not understand how to ensure all members of the discussion feel that their opinion will be taken seriously, valued and can be freely expressed.
2. Kitchen table discussions can be formally planned to reach targeted groups by advertising the venue and time.
3. Because these discussions reach groups that are not attracted to formal participation programs, sensitivity must be used in organising and facilitating meetings so as to encourage continued participation.
4. Select a centralised, neutral space (not affiliated with any one interest group in the locality).
5. Use informal neighbourhood networks to organize the first round of events.
6. Set ground rules about respecting other's opinions, and recording all issues for further discussion.
7. Needs sensitive handling to ensure no one dominates the discussion, and all opinions are valued.
8. Encourage group to record the outcomes of discussions and feed back into a broader participation program.
9. Encourage ongoing discussions.
10. Use these discussions as a means of gauging ongoing public response to a participation program.

3.29 MEDIA RELEASES

Engagement range	Inform
Difficulty level	Medium
Cost	Low (up to $1,000)
When might you use it:	To communicate an issue To build alliances, consensus To showcase product, plan, policy To discover community issues
Number of people required to help to organise:	1-3, depends on the audience size and level of complexity
Time to organise	Medium (6 weeks to 6 months)
Size of audience	Large (up to 30)
Issues/resources to think about	Volunteers/staff
Innovation level	Low

Description:

Project information released to various media corporations. Media releases are seen as being official and reflecting the corporation/group/agency position or the outcome of a project. They can also be used to raise awareness and generate publicity.

Objective:

- To get the widest possible coverage for a community issue or proposal through the publication or broadcasting of the information in the release. It may also elicit further enquiries by the media organisation about the issue, or the group or agency that put out the release.

Desired outcome:

- Wider awareness of an issue or proposal.

Uses/strengths:

- Can disseminate information quickly to a large number of people.
- Can be a predetermined method of notification.
- Can raise publicity and awareness.
- Can help an organisation or community group to make contact with the media.
- Can alert media organisations to an issue/event and may encourage their active participation through civic journalism.

Special considerations/weaknesses:

- Difficult to retract, should any changes occur.
- Should be written in a journalistic style (see Method).

- May not be used if more exciting news events take priority.
- May be re-written and key facts/ emphasis changed.
- Media organisations may become interested in an aspect of the project/issue that is not the focus of public concern.
- Media releases are competing with thousands of other incoming news items, and have a better chance of being used if they are sent directly to a journalist who has had previous friendly contact with the sender.
- The size of media releases limit the amount of real content that can be incorporated.
- Media releases have a better chance of being accepted if they have an element of controversy or risk, however an organisation or group may not wish to focus on possible negative outcomes or risks.

<u>Step by step guide:</u>

1. Determine the main news angle you wish to communicate.
2. Check deadlines for local publications/television/radio bulletins to ensure media release is received in time to be published before the event. Some local newspapers have a Friday deadline for the following Wednesday publication date. Radio programs may need to check the spokesperson to see whether they will be suitable for on-air interview, etc.
3. On average, send releases two weeks before events, except to magazines which may have a two three month lead time for publication.
4. Follow news style:
   - 4.1. Keep the focus local (with local spokespeople) for local papers.
   - 4.2. Send only major capital city issues or state-wide issues to state papers; only national issues (and use national spokespeople) for national papers/magazines.
   - 4.3. Use short sentences. Each sentence should be a separate paragraph.
   - 4.4. Use active sentences 'the group have decided', not 'It has been decided'.
   - 4.5. Avoid jargon and difficult words (keep it simple).
   - 4.6. rite about your group: 'The group will hold a poster competition at the Centralville Town Hall on Wednesday, 23 January'.
   - 4.7. First paragraph of no more than 25 words telling briefly who, what, where, when and why about the event, issue or project.
   - 4.8. If using quotes in the body of the release, quote credible spokespeople and identify them with their positions in the organisation.
   - 4.9. Keep information clear and unambiguous.
   - 4.10. Keep releases short, no longer than one page. If the media want more information, they will contact you.
   - 4.11. If for a community notices column, check the required size and format of items (may be 30 words or less).
   - 4.12. Include in the media release the date the release was written, and a contact name and phone number for someone who is easily contacted during office hours.
5. Check whether the media prefers email (most do now), or whether you can distribute your release via the Australian Associated Press (AAP) network (this will reach an Australia-wide audience).
6. If offering interviews, make it clear whether this is an exclusive for one media outlet (could be one print, one radio and one television, as these do not see one another as competing).

This can encourage coverage of your issue, whereas a general media conference may not be well attended.

7. Track coverage to see how and when your information is published.
8. Be sure to write and thank the journalist to develop a relationship that may encourage them to work with your organisation in tracking progress on the issue/project, and hence keep the community informed.

MEDIATION AND NEGOTIATION

Engagement range	Partnership
Difficulty level	Medium to Hard
Cost	Medium ($1,000to $10,000)
When might you use it:	To communicate an issue To build alliances, consensus To discover community issues To develop community capacity To develop action plan
Number of people required to help to organise:	1-3, depends on the audience size and level of complexity
Time to organise	Medium (6 weeks to 6 months
Size of audience	Small (up to 10) to Medium (11-30)
Issues/resources to think about	Publicity; Venue rental; Catering; Staffing; facilitator; Expert; Recorders; Audio and visual recording and amplification; Props for working in groups (pens, paper, pins, etc.); Furniture; Children's requirements
Innovation level	Medium to high

Description:

Negotiation is the process of searching for an agreement that satisfies various parties. An agreement may be reached either through an arbiter or through real negotiation. An arbiter allows only one party, the one in a position of power, to 'win'. The other party is forced to accept something of lesser value. A real negotiation implies a 'win-win' situation in which all parties are satisfied. Mediation is the attempt to help parties in a disagreement to hear one another, to minimise the harm that can come from disagreement (e.g. hostility or 'demonising' of the other parties) to maximise any area of agreement, and to find a way of preventing the areas if disagreement from interfering with the process of seeking a compromise or mutually agreed outcome.

Objective:

- To resolve differences in a creative and positive way, and to find a solution or a way for people to hear and appreciate the differences between their perspectives.

Desired outcome:

- Discussion of contentious issues and agreements found through consideration of differing opinions.

Uses/strengths:

- Generally used when normal participation methods fail.
- Attempts to provide a 'win-win' outcome rather than settling on a single course of action.

- Can improve satisfaction of all parties.
- May allow areas of convergence (areas where there are some mutual goals or agreements).

Special considerations/weaknesses:

- Generally requires a specialist moderator who is independent.
- Moderators can be costly, and their lack of knowledge of the content can be a drawback in the kinds of questions posed.
- Works best when the parties concerned are engaged; less well when a representative is asked to negotiate, as they may not feel they have the authority to be flexible in their solutions.
- Needs to get beyond set ‘positions’ (I/we are only willing to do this or that) and look at the interests of all parties (what they are trying to achieve in broad general terms (e.g. do we want clean sand, clean water, access to the beach, etc.) to create mutually satisfying outcomes.
- Needs all parties to agree to objective criteria by which to assess the ‘fairness’ of solutions.
- Can be time consuming; could take months of meetings to find a mutually satisfactory outcome.
- ‘Win-win’ is not guaranteed.

Step by step guide:

Negotiation and mediation are highly specialised activities and a simplistic methodology is not available. Specialists are generally required for negotiation and mediation. The following excerpt has been provided as an introduction:

1. Analyse the interest of the parties. This is important to understand the perceptions, the style of negotiation, and the interests and principles of the counterparts, as well as one’s own.
2. Plan the negotiation, and determine:
   - 2.1 What are the expectations from the negotiation?
   - 2.2 What are the terms of the negotiation?
   - 2.3 What are the non-negotiable terms and what can be modified?
   - 2.4 What is the minimum that an agreement can be reached on?
   - 2.5 What is the negotiation strategy?
   - 2.6 What are the most important interests of the other parties?
   - 2.7 How does one interact with or manage people?
3. Select the appropriate negotiation technique from among the following:
   - 3.1 Spiralling agreements: begin by reaching a minimum agreement, even though it is not related to the objectives, and build, bit by bit, on this first agreement.
   - 3.2 Changing of position: formulate the proposals in a different way, without changing the final result. Gathering information: ask for information from the other party to clarify their position.
   - 3.4 Making the cake bigger: offer alternatives that may be agreeable to the other party, without changing the terms.
   - 3.5 Commitments: formalise agreements orally and in writing before ending the negotiation.

4. Negotiate: be sensitive and quick to adapt to changing situations, but do not lose sight of the objective. Avoid confrontational positions and try to understand the interests of the other party. Some aspects that could interfere with the negotiation are:
   4.1 Personal positions and interests.
   4.2 Psychological and emotional aspects of the persons (place, placement of chairs, body language, gestures, etc.).
   4.3 Difficulties in communication (differences in languages, different meanings of the same words, etc.).

NEWSPAPER INSERTS

Engagement range	Inform
Difficulty level	Medium
Cost	Medium ($1,000to $10,000) to High (over $10,000)
When might you use it:	To showcase product, plan, policy To communicate an issue
Number of people required to help to organise:	1-3, depends on the audience size and level of complexity
Time to organise	Medium (6 weeks to 6 months)
Size of audience	Large (over 30)
Issues/resources to think about	Staff; Expertise in journalistic or advertising style or writing and layout
Innovation level	Low

Description:

An insert is a fact sheet that can be disseminated via a local newspaper. Inserts achieve high-level publicity for a project and normally are used at the commencement of a project. They create interest, describe the issue being considered and outline opportunities for public involvement in the participation process. Newspaper supplements can serve similar purposes, but cover the issue in more detail through features articles and/or advertisements. They can be a paid advertising arrangement, or can be put together by news staff in the public interest. Such supplements may include feedback opportunities, and may outline opportunities for public involvement.

Objective:

- To reach and inform the majority of people in a targeted geographic area about an issue or proposal.

Desired outcome:

- Increase awareness of a proposal or issue, even though many inserts will not be read.

Uses/strengths:

- Achieves high level publicity.
- Provides information.
- When a large number of potential stakeholders exist.
- When a large number of people are affected by a development decision (e.g. road works/planning scheme preparation).
- Outlines opportunities for public involvement in a participation process.

Special considerations/weaknesses:

- Content should be simply stated, concise and unambiguous.
- Content should provide basic information (do not overload with too much information).
- Contact information should be provided.
- Cost may be a factor if the newspaper charges for the inserts, or insists on advertising.
- If undertaken as a community service, rather than a commercial transaction, distribution depends on the newspapers willingness to insert the flyers, leaflets, etc.

<u>Step by step guide:</u>

1. Decide the size, cost and number of inserts by determining the potential number of stakeholders, and how these match with the delivery areas of the newspaper.
2. Decide on your key messages, including methods for public participation.
3. Write your information in simple, concise and unambiguous language.
4. Outline major events and the duration of the participation process.
5. Include contact information (i.e. key project staff [by name], information hotline numbers, location of information repository [if any], phone, email and website addresses).
6. If possible, use trained layout help to ensure the inserts attract interest and are easy to read.
7. Record contact made as a result of the insert, and add to project mailing list.
8. Use to report project outcomes as well as publicising the process.

NOMINAL GROUPS

Engagement range	Consult/Partnership
Difficulty level	Medium to Hard
Cost	Medium ($1,000to $10,000)
When might you use it:	To communicate an issue To build alliances, consensus To develop community capacity To develop action plan
Number of people required to help to organise:	1-3, depends on the audience size and level of complexity
Time to organise	Medium (6 weeks to 6 months)
Size of audience	Medium (11-30) to Large (over 30)
Issues/resources to think about	Publicity; Venue; Catering; Staffing; Facilitator; Audio and visual recording and amplification; Artists; Photographer; Overhead projectors, screens etc; A flip chart or newsprint for each group; masking tape; Pack of 3 x 5 cards for each table; Felt pens for each table; Paper and pencil for each participant; Response sheets
Innovation level	Medium to high

Description:

Nominal group technique is a process in which a group of people become a group in name only. This technique aims to eliminate social and psychological dynamics of group behaviour which can inhibit individual creativity and participation in group decisions. Everyone is given a structured opportunity to participate. Nominal group technique is a way of organising a meeting to enhance its productivity. Its purpose is to balance and increase participation, to use different processes for different phases of creative problem solving and to reduce the errors in aggregating individual judgments into group decisions. It is especially useful for problem identification, problem solving and program planning.

Objective:

- To increase participation in problem identification, problem solving and program planning, and to make sure that participants represent a balance of the range of opinions available within a community or group.

Desired outcome:

- Creative problem solving and group decisions that incorporate individual judgments with greater accuracy.

Uses/strengths:

- Highly effective workshop activity.

- Ensures input from all participants.
- Elicits a wide range of responses.
- Useful for determining democratically derived outcomes.
- Useful for fact-finding, idea generation, or solutions.

Special considerations/weaknesses:

- Good facilitators are required.
- Rules need to be clear at outset.
- The wording of questions must be unambiguous and clear.
- Not for routine business, bargaining, predetermined outcome, or groups requiring consensus.
- Can be difficult to convince people to use nominal groups for the first time.
- Explanations help to overcome this resistance, but a successful experience helps much more.

Step by step guide:

1. Advertise group meeting of three - four hours.
2. Select participants to ensure a mix of interests/community groups/social levels/age/gender, etc.
3. Hire facilitator skilled in nominal group meeting process. Success of the process depends on thorough preparation by the facilitator.
4. Leaders should clarify the questions to be asked, considering what key information they need. Pre-test the question before the meeting. Remember, global questions stimulate global answers. Emotional (likes/dislikes, etc.) information must be asked for directly.
5. For larger groups, organise into subgroups (seven-nine people) on the same or different topics, depending on the range of issues.
6. The facilitator should follow the full step-by-step process, which can include the silent generation and balloting of ideas used strategically in a wide variety of situations and taking relatively little time (e.g. for quick agenda setting).
7. Choose from the following steps, and follow the process:
   7.1 Silent generation of ideas in writing (10-20 minutes).
   7.2 Recorded round-robin listing of ideas on chart (20-40 minutes).
   7.3 A very brief discussion and clarification of each idea on the chart (20-40 minutes).
   7.4 Preliminary vote on priorities: silent, independent (10 minutes).
   7.5 Meeting break.
   7.6 Discussion of the preliminary vote (20-40 minutes).
   7.7 Final vote on priorities: silent independent (10 minutes).
   7.8 Listing and agreement on prioritized items.

Open House (or Open Days, Drop-In Centres)

Engagement range	Inform/Consult
Difficulty level	Medium
Cost	Medium ($1,000to $10,000)
When might you use it:	To communicate an issue To showcase product, plan, policy To discover community issues
Number of people required to help to organise:	1-3, depends on the audience size and level of complexity
Time to organise	Medium (6 weeks to 6 months) to Long (over 6 months)
Size of audience	Large (up to 30)
Issues/resources to think about	Publicity; Venue rental; Catering; Staffing; Moderator/facilitator
Innovation level	Low

Description:

Open houses provide information, a forum for understanding people's concerns and discussing issues, as well as opportunities for follow up or feedback (see Displays and Exhibits). A relatively informal event designed to allow people to drop in and obtain information at their convenience. Usually, the open house includes display information and presentation material complimented by printed handout materials and the presence of the sponsor's staff to meet with and answer people's questions one-on-one. Brief presentations should also be made at regular times to inform guests.

Objective:

- To provide one venue for people to visit where they can speak to staff or members of the organisation, and obtain a variety of information about an institution, issue or proposal.

Desired outcome:

- Those who visit during an open house will be more familiar with the venue, will know more about the operations and intention of the organisation or group that set up the open house, and may be more informed about an issue or proposal.

Uses/strengths:

- Useful when a large number of potential stakeholders exist and the issue is of concern to the wider community. Alternatively, it can be used to target a particular group.
- Frequently used as a lead-in to another participation activity and achieves early publicity for that activity.
- Can also be used to provide feedback at the completion of a public participation exercise.

- Can fit people's personal timetables.
- Where the issue is contentious, it provides a relaxed forum where conflict is less likely to occur.
- Fosters small group and one-on-one discussions.
- Allows other team members to be drawn on to answer difficult questions.
- Meets information and interaction needs of many members of the public who are not attracted to typical public meetings.
- Builds credibility.

<u>Special considerations/weaknesses:</u>

- Attendance is difficult to predict at an open house. Therefore, it is important to advertise in a number of ways that target different sections of the community and select the location carefully.
- It is possible to move the location of the open house on a regularly scheduled basis.
- Often, the concerns of a small number of people are well articulated at this forum.
- Lower attendance may mean that fewer people are informed. You need to use other methods to reach a wider audience.
- The low-key nature of an open house may also restrict people from asking questions and participating in discussions.
- Public input can be difficult to document, and may only be reported as hearsay.
- Protesters may use the opportunity to disrupt the event.
- Usually more staff intensive than a meeting.
- May not provide the opportunity to be heard that some of the public may expect.

<u>Step by step guide:</u>

1. The five steps to a successful open house are as follows:
   1.1 Understand your objective and develop a work plan
   1.2 Schedule a place and time
   1.3 Advertise
   1.4 Develop the display and supporting materials
   1.5 Set up
2. Consider the target audience and your objectives to decide whether an open house is the most appropriate public participation tool for the issue being discussed.
3. Some of the considerations in developing the work plan include: the cost of the display, how to convey information on the display, how much time it will take to design and produce the display and how the display materials can be transported from place to place. accessible location is critical in the success of the open house. Organisers should maintain a low key presence and make everyone feel welcome. They should also consider the needs of the particular audience (if there is a target group for the open house). The opening times should be flexible and change in response to the preference of the public. Comment sheets should be provided and staff should be available to answer questions and record comments.
4. The publicity of the open house is also important to its success so advertising is necessary. The location, opening times and purpose of the open house should be publicised in the

media. The open house should be left open as long as possible to allow as many of the public to use the facility as possible.

OPEN SPACE TECHNOLOGY

Engagement range	Inform/Consult
Difficulty level	Medium to Hard
Cost	Medium ($1,000to $10,000)
When might you use it:	To communicate an issue To discover community issues To develop community capacity
Number of people required to help to organise:	A team of people may be required (3- 12)
Time to organise	Medium (6 weeks to 6 months)
Size of audience	Large (over 30)
Issues/resources to think about	Venue with room for a large gathering space, plus up to 10 smaller breakout spaces, which offers shelter in case of rain, heat, etc.; Facilitator with experience in trained in open space technology techniques; Publicity (which, for a large gathering may include a website on which topics or themes can be predetermined); website or other means to disseminate outcomes or issues papers
Innovation level	Low

Description:

A radical participatory approach developed by US Management Consultant Harrison Owen in the 1980s. Stated simply, open space technology allows participants to offer topics for discussion and others to participate according to their interest. The theory behind open space technology is that people will take ownership of issues they wish to address. The open space technology operates on the following four principles:

1. Whoever comes are the right people
2. Whatever happens is the only thing that could have
3. Whenever it starts is the right time
4. When it's over, it's over

Objective:

- To provide an event which is relevant, timely, and participatory. Its relevance is determined by the participants, who determine the agenda, the length of the event, and the outcomes.

Desired outcome:

- Puts people of like interests in touch with one another, allows people to exchange views and to understand a wider range of viewpoints, and provides a sense of empowerment to shape the world towards the kind of future the participants might desire.

Uses/strengths:

- Appropriate for use where there is a need for new ideas and the prevailing climate is characterised by uncertainty, ambiguity and a low level of trust.
- Because there are a limited set of rules, the process is driven by the participants.
- Absence of 'control' of the process means participants must be prepared to go where the process takes them.
- Includes immediate summary and discussion.
- Provides a structure by giving participants opportunities and responsibilities to create a valuable product or an experience.

Special considerations/weaknesses:

- Facilities should be flexible to accommodate variable group sizes.
- A powerful theme or vision statement is needed to generate topics.
- A large number of participants are involved in the process (up to 500).
- The most important issues can sometimes be lost in the discussion.
- It can sometimes be difficult to get accurate records of results.

Method:

1. Determine whether the open space technology process is the most appropriate technique for your situation, considering the people who are likely to take part and their preferences and attitudes, and the venues available to you.
2. Select venue, facilitators and prepare information (open space technology can be successfully used in conjunction with other techniques such as conferences and workshops).
3. Publicise the event.
4. Describe process and rules to the participants, as outlined below:
   - 4.1 Principles: Whoever comes are the right people: Whatever happens is the only thing that could have: Whenever it starts is the right time: When it's over, it's over.
   - 4.2 Law of two feet: The law of two feet: people are honour bound to walk away from proceedings and sessions which they believe are irrelevant.
   - 4.3. Follow due process.
5. One by one, each person who wishes to, steps into the centre of the circle and announces their name and topics they feel passionate enough about to be willing to lead a break out session on that topic.
6. Each passionate person writes the topic on a piece of paper along with time and venue for a discussion.
7. Following announcements of topics by passionate people, the market place becomes open. The marketplace is a wall where all the topics, times and venues are posted to allow participants to decide which session to sign up to.
8. Those who announced the topics facilitate the individual discussions and appoint people to record minutes on provided computers.
9. Reconvene into the larger group and report back, or combine reports into one document and ensure widespread dissemination to all those who took part, and all those likely to make a decision.

PARTICIPANT OBSERVATION

Engagement range	Inform/Consult
Difficulty level	Medium to Hard
Cost	Medium ($1,000to $10,000) High (over $10,000)
When might you use it:	To communicate an issue To discover community issues To develop community capacity To showcase product, plan, policy To develop action plan
Number of people required to help to organise:	1-3 people
Time to organise	Medium (6 weeks to 6 months) Long (over 6 months)
Size of audience	Large (over 30)
Issues/resources to think about	Staff; Publicity; Accommodation; Observation locations (may include a location for a storefront drop-in centre); Record-keeping facilities (computers, notebooks); Venues and resources for public meetings (see Workshops)
Innovation level	Low

Description:

Participant observation is a method of collecting information about the operation of, and attitudes existing in, a community through a researcher living in the area for an extended period. The participant observer becomes known within the community, and gets to know the community in a more intimate and detailed way than someone who simply comes to do a survey and then departs. The participant observer consequently is given much more detailed information, and may identify specific issues and assist groups to address these by developing mutually agreed principles and practices.

Objective:

- To collect more detailed information about a community's habits, opinions and issues and with a view to developing planning and policies that better incorporate the community's needs and wishes.

Desired outcome:

- One way of ensuring that planning and decision making incorporates community needs and opinions, and will therefore be more acceptable and more useful to the community.

Uses/strengths:

- Can develop greater understanding of sensitive situations.
- Can be used before developing a consultation program in cases where the nature of community issues is not known to agencies.
- Can be used for scoping information and determining key players when the issue is contentious or controversial.
- Can assist in the development of a more thoughtful consultation program because participant observation is usually conducted incognito.
- Can allow the development of consultation processes that suit the subject community.

<u>Special considerations/weaknesses:</u>

- This method is limited, and needs to be used in conjunction with other methods for collecting information (e.g. surveys, public meetings, and/or displays and exhibits).
- Depends on the ability of the researcher/consultant to correctly observe and draw appropriate conclusions.
- Can create concern in the community.
- Not recommended for use in isolation but in conjunction with other tools and techniques, to offset any bias or inaccuracy in the observer's conclusions.
- Applicable to a wide variety of issues.
- Particularly useful as a technique where the issue is contentious or controversial.
- Takes a long time.

<u>Method:</u>

1. Researcher lives in or regularly visits the site/suburb/organisation.
2. Observations are made by the researcher regarding opinions or reactions to particular issues.
3. Researchers should state their intentions openly, and integrate themselves into the community.
4. The conclusions drawn by the researcher depend largely on the researcher's abilities, and should be seen within this context.
5. Generally, participant observation should be combined with actual participation techniques to be of any value.

PLANNING4REAL

Engagement range	Inform/Consult
Difficulty level	Medium to Hard
Cost	Medium ($1,000to $10,000) High (over $10,000)
When might you use it:	To showcase product, plan, policy To communicate an issue To discover community issues To develop community capacity To develop action plan
Number of people required to help to organise:	A team of people may be required (3- 12)
Time to organise	Medium (6 weeks to 6 months) Long (over 6 months)
Size of audience	Large (over 30)
Issues/resources to think about	Publicity; Workshop location must be large enough to accommodate the model (common community spaces are preferred); Catering; Staffing; Moderator/facilitator; Audio/visual equipment; Artists; Photographer; Modelling equipment: Sheets of polystyrene are suggested as the model base, glued to cardboard or other hardboard for stability; Props for working in groups (markers, pins, tape, glue and access to photocopying facilities for duplication); Tables/chairs; Children's requirements
Innovation level	Medium to HighLow

Description:

Planning4real offers local people a 'voice' to bring about an improvement to their own neighbourhood or community (Neighbourhood Initiatives Foundation 1995). Local people begin by constructing a three-dimensional model of their neighbourhood or catchment area. From this, they construct their vision of their ideal neighbourhood or catchment by placing suggestions cards on a three-dimensional model, then sorting and prioritising the suggestions. The model of the neighbourhood or catchment is made so that it can be moved from venue to venue, allowing more people to participate. Used since the late 1970s in Britain, this planning tool is now used throughout the world. Participants are largely intended to be from the target community, with government officials, local councillors, and professionals present to answer questions, when requested.

Objective:

- To increase community involvement and knowledge of proposed changes or planning issues through allowing them to place their suggestions and concerns directly on to a three-dimensional model; this also increases the chance that planning and decision-making will be made with a fuller knowledge and understanding of community issues and needs.

Desired outcome:

- A design or plan that incorporates community needs and issues, and that will therefore be more acceptable and useful to the community, and will give the community a sense of ownership of the plan that may incorporate elements of community monitoring and maintenance.

Uses/strengths:

- Provides a three-dimensional model that may help people better envisage the changes suggested for the neighbourhood.
- Offers a hands-on approach that allows participants to visualise the preferred future for an area.
- Particularly effective in mobilising community support and interest.
- Specific projects are identified and implementation is set in motion.
- Has an advantage for those who are more visual/tactile in their approach.
- Can help bridge language barriers in mixed language areas.

Special considerations/weaknesses:

- Requires commitment from decision makers to follow through on suggestions.
- Needs commitment from participants to stay for two and a half hours to participate in the whole process.
- Can be expensive to develop a three-dimensional model.
- If building a model with volunteers and found materials, can take three months to collect materials and create the model in easily movable sections.
- Can take two-three months for follow up and feedback.

Method:

1. Hire a knowledgeable moderator to start the process, although a community member with some background in community development could readily pick up the key concepts through the 'kit' which is sold by the Neighbourhood Initiatives Foundation.
2. Assemble the three-dimensional model of the neighbourhood from lightweight material and in easily transportable sections (ask volunteers, a local club, students, or others as a way to involve key people). The model is usually best at a scale of 1:200 or 1:300, which allows people to identify their own home.
3. Use the model to publicise public meetings, by taking it around shopping centres and community meeting points for about two weeks to generate interest and begin the process of identifying problems and opportunities.
4. Begin training sessions with a few local residents to familiarise them with the process.
5. Hold public meetings where cutouts are placed on the model as a way to identify issues of concern to the community.
6. Form small, ad hoc 'working parties' around these issues (e.g. traffic, shopping facilities, play areas, work opportunities, coastal zone management and planning). These working parties

then meet to work out details and to negotiate between conflicting interests and priorities, using a ‘now, soon, later’ chart as a guide.

7. Plan a series of activities to develop a momentum that continues into specific practical proposals. Sufficient time is needed for an effective exercise. Three months is suggested for the initial stage of mobilisation, setting up a steering group, building the model and publicising the sessions.
8. Circulate steps taken in local newsletter and/or media.

POSTER COMPETITION

Engagement range	Inform/Consult
Difficulty level	Medium to Hard
Cost	Low (up to $1,000)
When might you use it:	To communicate an issue To discover community issues To showcase product, plan, policy
Number of people required to help to organise:	1-3 people
Time to organise	Medium (6 weeks to 6 months) Long (over 6 months)
Size of audience	Large (over 30)
Issues/resources to think about	Staffing; Publicity; Judges/prizes; Venue for display
Innovation level	Low to Medium

Description:

Poster competitions raise awareness of issues and participation programs. Posters provide visual, colourful, simple ways to communicate community issues and events, and are suitable for display in community spaces. Poster competitions that display children's work can reflect the attitudes of much of the community as children between certain ages tend to reflect their parents' ideas. Poster competitions can generate publicity and provide information (see Interactive Displays).

Objective:

- To engage the community's interest in an issue, reveal community issues, and raise awareness of an issue in a way that is visual, inclusive and fun.

Desired outcome:

- A visual display of current states of community knowledge of an issue, community expectations and visions, and provides an opportunity to answer questions about that issue.

Uses/strengths:

- Provides basic information about a process, project or document in a fast, concise and clear way.
- Can allow easy updates on an issue/process/project.
- Can create publicity for an issue/event.
- If the poster competition is displayed in public spaces, they can provide easy ways for people to get information.

- Provides easier ways to absorb information for those more comfortable with pictures than words (and those from other cultures who speak languages other than the dominant language).
- Can be humorous, interesting, colourful and may include cartoons and diagrams.
- Provides an informal gauge of community attitudes to issues.
- Creates interesting graphic material for the project.
- Can lead to greater participation.
- Generates ideas.
- Excellent for children's participation.
- Can encourage people to seek more information.

Special considerations/weaknesses:

- May need descriptions to explain the concept portrayed on the posters.
- Where posters are developed by school children or members of the public, may not cover all aspects of an issue/process/project (may need some knowledgeable staff to accompany a display of the works to answer questions).
- May need continual staffing to watch display to avoid vandalism and explain the display (see above).
- Competitions can cause ill will if the judging is considered to be unfair.

Step by step guide:

1. Determine issues/aspect for poster competition and the community groups to be asked to participate. Encourage participation from all ages and community groups.
2. Set timeframe for poster competition (one month), size of posters, media, due date and where they are to be delivered. Specify how many words for any captions/ explanations.
3. Advertise competition, with details of where, when and how to deliver the posters, and how they will be judged, and where the finalists will be displayed.
4. Select an appropriate local personality/politician to announce the winners.
5. Sort posters and determine which are suitable for display. Advise contributors whose posters have been selected for display and where they can be seen.
6. Invite the media to the judging, and announce winners.
7. Provide options for visitors to the poster display to make comments/provide feedback.
8. Prepare a report on the issues raised in the posters and the feedback, and forward this to relevant authorities.

PRINTED INFORMATION

Engagement range	Inform
Difficulty level	Easy to Medium
Cost	Medium ($1,000to $10,000) High (over $10,000)
When might you use it:	To communicate an issue To showcase product, plan, policy
Number of people required to help to organise:	1-3 people
Time to organise	Medium (6 weeks to 6 months)
Size of audience	Large (over 30)
Issues/resources to think about	Staff or volunteers with expertise in writing, editing and layout; Paper; Printing; Postage
Innovation level	Low

Description:

Printed material is still one of the easiest ways to publicise and provide information on a project/issue, or publicise a participation process such as an event or meeting. Popular forms include: fact sheets, flyers, newsletters, brochures, issues papers, reports, surveys etc. These can be single purpose or be produced as a series for distribution (e.g. newsletters). Printed material can be distributed hand to hand, made available for the public to pick up, or mailed out either directly to a select mailing list, or included as 'bill stuffers' with regular mail outs such as utility bills, rates notice or other regularly posted bills.

Objective:

- To provide easily scanned details, in words and drawings, to inform a community about an issue or proposal. Printed information can be easily handed out and carried away.

Desired outcome:

- Easy and familiar way of creasing awareness of an issue and/or soliciting responses to an issue or proposal.

Uses/strengths:

- Printed public information materials can combine the needs of publicity with information and allow for minor public input.
- They can reach a large amount of people through mailing or via the availability of the information to the public.
- If comment sheets or questionnaires are included the material can allow for limited public input to a project.
- Can facilitate the documentation of the public participation process.
- Can be a low-cost means of publicity.

- Can be economically distributed by doubling up with existing mail out lists.

Special considerations/weaknesses:

- The problem with most printed materials is the limited space available to communicate complicated concepts.
- Needs time to decide on text, visuals, proofread, print and fold.
- There is no guarantee that the materials will be read.
- If mailed, the guarantee of being read is only as good as the mailing list itself; mailing lists need regular updating to avoid wasted time, energy and paper.
- Appearance of the material should be visually interesting but should avoid a 'sales' look.
- Can be lost if included with many other flyers and bill stuffers (consider using coloured paper and bold headlines if mailing as a bill stuffer, to ensure this is not just binned without reading).
- Without visual elements, this can exclude those who are not print literate.

Step by step guide:

1. Available budget, and the use of other publicity methods and tools for distributing project information, will determine just what type of printed material will best suit your need.
2. Plan your messages well. Provide regular updates, but do not bombard people with information.
3. Develop the material with the following considerations in mind:
   - Make it eye catching (colour, photos, cartoons)
   - Make it simple and easy to understand
   - Provide points of contact, such as the name of a central information contact or details of the participation program
   - Avoid a 'sales' look
   - Do not overload with information.
4. Limited public input can be sought through printed public information materials by including surveys and questionnaires or comment/ response sheets.
5. Enclosing a stamped, addressed envelope (or email address/website) with mail outs will improve the return of comments for posted materials.
6. The material should be easily available to the public and be accessible from a number of locations.
7. It is critical that the information outlines the public's role in the participation process or opportunities for participation.
8. Keep mailing lists up to date and check for duplication to save money, time and paper.
9. If distributing as a bill stuffer, speak to agency/department which distributes bills and find out when they need the material in order to go out in the appropriate mail out, and in what format. Check what else is being distributed with bills, and decide whether your flyer will have a good chance of being read. Deliver/arrange for printer to deliver to agency/department who will stuff and distribute.

PRIORITISATION MATRIX

Engagement range	Inform/Consult
Difficulty level	Easy
Cost	Low (up to $1,000)
When might you use it:	To develop an Action Plan To discover community issues To develop community capacity To build alliances, consensus
Number of people required to help to organise:	1-3 people
Time to organise	Short (Up to 6 weeks)
Size of audience	Medium (11-30) Large (over 30)
Issues/resources to think about	Publicity; Venue; Catering; Staffing; Moderator/facilitator; Artists/photographer; Audiovisual recording equipment and Amplification; Overhead/Data projectors and screen; Printed public information sheets; Response sheets; Props for working in groups (pens, paper, pins, etc.); Furniture; Children's requirements
Innovation level	Medium to High

Description:

A prioritisation matrix is a technique used to achieve consensus within a specific group of participants about an issue. The matrix helps rank problems or issues (usually generated through brainstorming or other techniques) by a particular criterion that is important to the project, as defined by the participants. This allows participants to clearly see which issues are the most important to work on solving first. Prioritisation matrices are used to determine what participants consider to be the most pressing issues. A prioritisation matrix can use whatever resources are available to create a table of issues and boxes for participants to cast their 'votes'. Tools can include whiteboards, computer databases, or twigs and stones in a field trip setting. The important thing is to list all the issues, to determine the frequency with which problems arise in relation to an issue, the importance the people give to this, and to count the votes to determine what is seen by the majority of people as a priority.

Objective:

- To identify and prioritise the important issues for a community

Desired outcome:

- A prioritisation matrix of issues identified by a community

Uses/strengths:

- Can assist in defining the most important issues in participation projects with many issues.
- Provides a democratic and transparent device for determining priorities.
- Can provide a focus for action

Special considerations/weaknesses:

- Setting up criteria can be problematic, if the brainstorming process raises a large number of issues.
- Some issues may not be considered because they are not raised by participants.

Step by step guide:

1. Conduct a brainstorming session on issues that participants wish to explore in relation to a proposal, plan or community service (See the Brainstorming tool to learn how to conduct group brainstorming).
2. Fill out the prioritisation matrix chart with the group: issue/frequency/importance/feasibility/total points
3. In the first column, write down the issues that were mentioned in the brainstorming session.
4. In the second to fourth columns, define your criteria. Examples of some typical criteria are:
    - Frequency: how frequently does/will this issue affect the participants? Does it occur often or only on rare occasions?
    - Importance: from the point of view of the users, what are the most important issue? Add the issues that the organising agency or group wants to address?
    - Feasibility: how realistic is it that you can find a way to address this issue? Will it be easy or difficult? You can choose other criteria if they better fit the situation you are discussing (e.g. cost, environmental impact [high to low], number of affected persons can act as criteria). For a more quantitative comparison, you could use cost, amount of time, or other numerical indicators. It is also possible to use number values for each criteria and provide a rank out of 10 for each criteria. Collating total numbers for all criteria against issue can indicate the issues of highest priority.
5. Rank/Vote: Each participant now votes once in each of the boxes. Total all the votes together. The totals help you see clearly how to identify the priorities.

PUBLIC CONVERSATION

Engagement range	Inform/Consult
Difficulty level	Medium to Hard
Cost	Low (under $1,000) Medium ($1,000to $10,000)
When might you use it:	To build alliances, consensus To discover community issues To develop community capacity
Number of people required to help to organise:	1-3 people
Time to organise	Medium (6 weeks to 6 months)
Size of audience	Medium (11-30) Large (over 30)
Issues/resources to think about	Facilitator; Staff; Volunteers; Unobtrusive recording equipment
Innovation level	Low to Medium

Description:

Public conversation and/or individual discussion are informal consultations that allow you to talk to participants in a direct and personal manner. Informal consultation techniques such as these support more formal consultation techniques by identifying key issues, attitudes, skills and knowledge. The personal level of discussion of these tools is generally not possible under more formal consultation approaches and a greater appreciation of project issues can emerge as a consequence. Such informal discussions allow a free ranging discussion around the issues which may reveal issues or attitudes that would not come to light through more structured surveys which may begin with a pre-conceived notion of who and what is relevant to the issue.
As well, public conversations can be facilitated with a view to reducing polarisation on contentious issues. Through engaging the opposing factions in a series of ongoing informal discussions with professional facilitation some understanding of one another's viewpoints can be established, and this can assist a more formal process of consultation by focusing attention on the issues rather than the actions or assumed misdemeanours of the 'other side'. Public conversations may involve lay and professional speakers.

Objective:

- To identify issues that are of relevance to community groups or members who are affected by or interested in an issue. This may include revealing the reasoning behind groups or individuals taking very polarised positions, with a view to finding ways for those who are polarised in this way to hear one another's viewpoints and be able to work together.

Desired outcome:

- Can reveal unknown issues and aspects of community views on a plan or project that will allow the plan to be improved or modified to take these into account.

- Can reveal the thinking behind polarised viewpoints which provides the possibility for people to work together in a consultative process who might otherwise be disruptive or distract the focus from the desired outcome.

Uses/strengths:

- Can help identify individuals and groups who should be consulted as well as how they should be notified or invited.
- Can help gather information and understand people's viewpoints prior to formalising programs.
- Maintains and establishes good community relations.
- Directly involves individuals.
- Offers insight into issues prior to the development of a consultation program, or may suggest alternative approaches.

Special considerations/weaknesses:

- Can be costly.
- Can be time consuming.
- Time and cost constraints can limit the number of participants.
- Discussions may be difficult to incorporate into participation findings.
- Opinions may not be representative.

Step by step guide:

Individual discussions

1. Approach people that are potential stakeholders in the following ways:
    - On the telephone
    - On the street
    - At places of work
    - In public places
2. Identify yourself and ask if the person is interested in discussing the issue.
3. Arrange venue, times.
4. Allow the participant flexibility in steering the discussion to areas of their interest
5. Take notes (or tape/type notes).
6. Use findings to modify a participation program and/or target specific stakeholder groups.

Group public conversations

1. Identify the issue or issues to be discussed.
2. Advertise public meeting time and issue.
3. Hire a facilitator who can bring a non-adversarial approach to the discussion.
4. Record discussion points.
5. Write up and distribute a report of the discussions, acknowledging the differing viewpoints and highlighting areas of overlap and difference.
6. If such a discussion is part of a decision-making process, describe the final recommendations and reasons that come from the public discussion.

PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT VOLUNTEERS

Engagement range	Inform/Consult
Difficulty level	Medium to Hard
Cost	Low (up to $1,000)
When might you use it:	To showcase product, plan, policy To communicate an issue
Number of people required to help to organise:	1-3 people
Time to organise	Medium (6 weeks to 6 months)
Size of audience	Large (over 30)
Issues/resources to think about	Staff; Telephones; Computers/printing; Trainers in the skills or knowledge needed by volunteers
Innovation level	Low

Description:

Public involvement volunteers are people from the community who are temporarily enlisted to assist in developing and implementing a public involvement program. These volunteers can take on various roles according to the nature of the participation program (e.g. they might show people around a facility or site, hand out or letterbox drop information brochures, engage passers-by in a survey, answer telephone queries or undertake a telephone survey). Public involvement volunteers would normally have an interest in the issue or the community, and be willing to assist. Such volunteers will extend the staffing for an event or outreach without a great deal of additional cost. For example, if dunes are being stripped of vegetation and eroded, a public awareness campaign may be needed to enlist community involvement in planning and acting to revegetate and protect the foreshores. The volunteers need to be clear about the purpose of the event or process, and to be well briefed at the outset and kept up to date so that they can undertake their work effectively.

Objective:

- To expand the available people to staff an event or activity without increasing the budget. However, the volunteers may find that participating increases their skills and knowledge, and therefore there can be a gain for all parties.

Desired outcome:

- Volunteers who are more skilled and informed as a result of participating.

Uses/strengths:

- Public involvement volunteers can help a group or agency who is undertaking a public information campaign or a public consultation process. For example, public involvement volunteers may be enlisted to do the following:
    - Handle general administration (fold, staple, telephone, file)
    - Staff open days or open house

  - Distribute material door-to-door or at meetings
  - Act as a volunteer speakers' bureau
  - Stretch a limited budget
- Having public involvement volunteers can also:
  - Expand possibilities for community participation. More volunteers offer more choices for meeting community groups at a place of their choosing, which increases the number of participants in a planning process.
  - Help the organisation understand community viewpoints.
  - Help the community understand the issue and/or process.
  - Add vigour to the public involvement process.
  - Help assemble a community perspective on a project or program.
  - Add a level of person-to-person communication.
  - Bridge communication gaps.
  - Offer an advantage in eliciting concerns and issues.
  - Help identify people for leadership positions

Special considerations/weaknesses:

- The organising agency or group has less control over unpaid volunteers.
- These techniques do not substitute for professional staff involvement.
- Volunteer loses credibility and standing in the community if things go awry.
- Must allow some training time and costs

Step by step guide:

1. Plan to recruit and train volunteers before you need them. These may be members of partnership agencies, consultants, researchers, agency board members, local government members, or community residents.
2. Plan what you can achieve with the number of volunteers available. Match your volunteer's capacities to the task they will be given (e.g. those who are confident public speakers could be sent to speak to public meetings or local government representatives). Those with secretarial skills could be allocated to typing information sheets and/or creating databases to record feedback and information received. Those with media skills could work on developing promotional materials. In an open house situation, volunteers can be shown the facility or site and key issues explained so that they can effectively usher community groups around the site.
3. Organise training for your volunteers, which should be simple and should continue throughout the campaign or event, as new information or issues are discovered. Training may include: public speaking practice and feedback, meeting facilitation, media liaison, writing reports, entering data.
4. Appoint a coordinator for volunteers. This person will be responsible for liaising with volunteers to ensure they are clear what is expected of them, when and where. This person would be the central information point for further queries, or for letting organisers know if a volunteer cannot do what they have undertaken to do.
5. Provide a budget for volunteer work which includes costs of background briefing papers, handouts, transport, accommodation, phone calls made from home, and other out-of-pocket costs incurred by volunteers.

PUBLIC MEETING

Engagement range	Inform/Consult
Difficulty level	Medium
Cost	Low (up to $1,000) Medium ($1,000to $10,000)
When might you use it:	To showcase product, plan, policy To communicate an issue
Number of people required to help to organise:	1-3 people
Time to organise	Short (up to 6 weeks) Medium (6 weeks to 6 months)
Size of audience	Large (over 30)
Issues/resources to think about	Venue; Catering; Staffing; Moderator/facilitator; Overhead/data projectors and screen; Props for working in groups (pens, paper, pins, etc.); Children's requirements
Innovation level	Low

Description:

A meeting is a coming together of people for a specific purpose. The meeting can involve a large number of people, or a smaller (under 10) number of people who focus on a specific problem or purpose. Meetings generally have a facilitator who encourages two-way communication, and a recorder who records suggestions and issues that are revealed at the meeting. Public meetings provide a good focal point for media interest in an event, and photos can provide a visual indicator or levels of interest and the range of people who attended. Public meetings are often the springboard for a movement or for the establishment of a common-interest group which will continue to act on the issues raised and suggestions made. Public meetings are familiar, established ways for people to come together to express their opinions, hear a public speaker, or plan a strategy. They can build a feeling of community and attendance levels provide an indicator of the level of interest within a community on a particular issue. Smaller focus group meetings can be made up of people with common concerns who may not feel confident speaking up in a larger public gathering (e.g. women, those who speak English as a second language, Indigenous groups). In a separate venue, these people can speak comfortably together, share common issues and a common purpose. The findings from focus group meetings can be presented to larger group meetings, giving a 'voice' to those in the community who are unable to speak up in a larger meeting (See also Focus Groups).

Objective:

- To engage a wide audience in information sharing and discussion

Desired Outcome:

- Increase awareness of an issue or proposal, and can be a starting point for, or an ongoing means of engaging, further public involvement.

Uses/strengths:

- Allows the involvement and input of a wide range of people.
- Can develop consensus for action on complex issues that affect the broad community.
- Disseminates detailed information and decisions throughout the community.
- Provides opportunities for exploring alternative strategies and building consensus.

Special considerations/weaknesses:

- Unless well facilitated, those perceived as having power within the community, or those who are most articulate and domineering in their verbal style can dominate the meeting.
- Participants may not come from a broad enough range to represent the entire community.
- Organisers must be aware of potential conflicts.
- Community members may not be willing to work together.
- May not achieve consensus.
- Can be time and labour intensive.

Step by step guide:

1. Establish why you need to consult the community; do not hold a public meeting or consult unnecessarily; this wastes people's time, and may create disinterest for the future.
2. Consider the circumstances of the community and the issues.
3. Schedule a series of meetings. A suggested series follows:
   3.1. Meeting 1:
      - Introduce project and key personnel
      - Supply project information
      - Allow the community to ask questions and identify issues of concern
      - Provide contact points
      - Identify groups with specific concerns for targeted consultation

   3.2. Meeting 2:
      - Break between meetings allows participants to consider views and concerns
      - Reintroduce project
      - Activate good listening skills
      - Clarification and expansion of issues

   3.3. Meeting 3:
      - Information and feedback on how issues and concerns are being met
      - Presentation at the conclusion of a project or make recommendations for the community's consideration
      - Discuss ongoing participation in the process
4. Publicise and advertise the meeting; advertise weekly in local media
5. Book a venue and arrange catering with flexibility as to numbers as attendance is difficult to predict:
      - Venue should be neutral territory
      - Provide no alcohol

- Provide refreshments at the conclusion of the meeting

6. Timing: Conduct the meeting at a time where the largest number of participants can attend.
7. Inform participants of chairperson/facilitator/guest speakers.
8. Determine the conduct of the meeting:
    - Work closely with the chair
    - General format is presentation followed by question time
    - Present agenda
    - Field questions
    - Record comments
9. Considerations:
    - Widely advise the ways feedback from the community is being incorporated into the project. Avoid allowing the meeting to be taken over by more vocal community members
    - Be prepared to change tack during the meeting
    - Cater for people with disabilities or from non-English speaking backgrounds
    - Never lose your temper
    - Set up early

QUESTIONNAIRES AND RESPONSES

Engagement range	Inform/Consult
Difficulty level	Easy
Cost	Low (up to $1,000) Medium ($1,000to $10,000)
When might you use it:	To discover community issues
Number of people required to help to organise:	1-3 people
Time to organise	Short (up to 6 weeks) Medium (6 weeks to 6 months)
Size of audience	Large (over 30)
Issues/resources to think about	Staff or volunteers; Access to expertise in developing questionnaires; Small trial group for trialling questionnaire and ensuring that the data you collect is the data you are seeking.
Innovation level	Low

Description:
Questionnaires are the basic research tool used to collect information, and are usually developed and tested to ensure that they are easily understood and will collect the information required. Questionnaires ensure that exactly the same questions are presented to each person surveyed, and this helps with the reliability of the results. Questionnaires can be delivered via face-to-face interviews, telephone interviews, self-complete forms, mail outs or online. Questionnaires can be distributed by email as well as posted or faxed. Response sheets can be collected at a workshop, or can be picked up at a workshop and mailed back. These can also be mailed out in ways that reduce postage costs, when they are included in routine mail-outs such as the distribution of fact sheets or accounts.

Objectives:

- To measure of community opinion about an issues at a certain time or in a certain area.

Desired Outcome:

- Information on which to base decisions about planning and management of community and/or natural resources.

Uses/strengths:

- Less personal than interviewing, their anonymity can encourage more honest answers.
- Works well to reach respondents who are widely scattered or live considerable distances away.
- Provides information from those unlikely to attend meetings and workshops.
- Permits expansion of the mail list.

- Can be used for statistical validation.
- Allows results to be extrapolated by subgroups.
- Allows the respondent to fill out at a convenient time.
- More economical and less labour intensive than interviews and telephone surveys as they provide larger samples for lower total costs.

<u>Special considerations/weaknesses:</u>

- Generally only useful for qualitative data.
- Low response rates can bias the results. Can involve follow up telephone calls and letters to encourage returns.
- Needs a return envelope/freepost address to encourage participation.
- Depends on a high degree of literacy.
- Wording of questions needs to be unambiguous to avoid bias, and should be pre-tested on a sample audience to ensure that you receive the information you desire.

<u>Step by step guide:</u>

1. Draft questions. Keep as short as possible.
2. Trial questions with a small sample (pilot group) to determine whether they are unbiased, straightforward and not open to misinterpretation.
3. Indicate the purpose of the questionnaire at outset.
4. Include qualitative data (e.g. age, sex, address, education, etc.) to allow for further extrapolation of the results.
5. Include any new names/addresses in the mailing list.
6. Send out with printed information materials.
7. If the budget allows, provide free mail reply (stamped addressed envelope; freepost mailbox, etc.) to improve responses.
8. Document responses as part of the public involvement process.

ROLE PLAYS

Engagement range	Inform/Consult
Difficulty level	Medium to Hard
Cost	Low (up to $1,000) Medium ($1,000to $10,000)
When might you use it:	To build alliances, consensus
Number of people required to help to organise:	A team of people (3-6) may be required
Time to organise	Short (up to 6 weeks) Medium (6 weeks to 6 months)
Size of audience	Medium (10-30) Large (over 30)
Issues/resources to think about	Publicity; Venue; Furniture; Catering; Staffing; Moderator/facilitator; Audio and visual recording and amplification; Overhead/data projectors and screen; Printed public information materials; Props for working in groups (pens, paper, pins, etc.); Children's requirements; Response sheets
Innovation level	Medium

Description:

An activity where participants take on designated roles and act out characters according to predetermined situations, followed by an evaluation of the activity. People may choose from a range of set roles. By getting people to take on a role that may be unfamiliar to them, this process enhances understanding of the issue from another perspective. However, role-playing requires skilled facilitation, and everyone must be 'de-briefed' and clearly directed to step out of role and return to their own persona before leaving the exercise, or confusion can ensue. Highly useful as an ice breaker, to get people talking and interacting with one another about the issue, and also to gain some empathy for the position of other stakeholders. Role playing can involve risks. A person must try to understand another's point of view to the extent that they can act in ways that are appropriate and recognisable.

Objectives:

- To help people see other viewpoints, and the range of different perspectives that may affect decisions and planning in relation to natural resources.
- To develop team-building as people see how different roles are necessary in the total natural resource management perspective.

Desired Outcome:

- Greater awareness of other people's roles in a group, or in relation to an issue or proposal, and the relevance or importance of these roles.

Uses/strengths:

- Participants can take risk-free positions and view situations from other perspectives.
- Great as an ice-breaker.
- Leads to greater understanding of issues.
- Can be a fun activity that encourages team building within the participation program.
- Good for scoping the extent of conflicts.

Special considerations/weaknesses:

- People may have little appreciation of other's positions.
- Can insult unless treated in a light hearted manner.
- Participants often require encouragement to take on another's role.
- Requires clear direction that the role playing is now over, and ensure that everyone knows that they are now speaking for themselves alone, or confusion can ensue. Having badges or costumes that are taken off at the end of the role-play can help this process.
- Needs a skilled facilitator with experience of role playing and debriefing.

Step by step guide:

1. Determine all the agencies or individuals that are likely to influence a particular issue (e.g. commercial organisations, government agencies, non-government organisations, community 'personalities') and develop badges, lists or costumes to develop a number of roles to make for interesting interactions.
2. Assign roles. Generally, greatest success occurs when people opposed to one another take on each other's roles, thus allowing them to put themselves into the other person's position. This works best when there is some visual indicator or the role being played(e.g. a cap or badge).
3. Describe a scenario that introduces the issue in a non-threatening way. This technique can cause conflict when used for a contentious issue, so ensure that trained facilitators are available to defuse any confrontations and address the conflict in more constructive ways.
4. Treat the activity as a light-hearted exercise and encourage participation by indicating the lack of consequence from the activity.
5. The person playing the role may be advised by someone with experience in the role they are playing (e.g. a resident who is playing a natural resource manager may be advised by someone experienced in management in that area). Role plays are then adlibbed, based on the understanding of the activities/attitudes of the person whose role they are taking.
6. Facilitate the role play to maximise understanding of other's positions. Hence, ask participants why they take a position, or express a certain opinion, while in role.
7. Follow up the activity with a debriefing session that seeks to clarify the variety of potential positions as a pre-curser to the actual participation process.
8. Make clear the point at which the role play is over: Allow people to say any last things 'in role', then make it clear that when they return to their own seat they return to being themselves.

SCENARIO TESTING

Engagement range	Inform/Consult
Difficulty level	Medium to Hard
Cost	Low (up to $1,000) Medium ($1,000to $10,000)
When might you use it:	To showcase product, plan, policy To communicate an issue To develop community capacity To develop action plan To identify a variety of plausible trends within each issue To gain a greater understanding of possible future concerns/issues/problems
Number of people required to help to organise:	A team of people (3-6) may be required
Time to organise	Short (up to 6 weeks) Medium (6 weeks to 6 months)
Size of audience	Large (over 30)
Issues/resources to think about	Publicity; Venue; Furniture; Catering; Staffing; Moderator/facilitator; Overhead/data projectors and screen; Audiovisual recording equipment and amplification; Artists/photographer; Printed public information sheets; Props for working in groups (pens, paper, pins, etc.); Children's requirements; Response sheets
Innovation level	Medium to High

Description:

Scenarios are a way of developing alternative futures based on different combinations of assumptions, facts and trends, and area where more understanding is needed for your particular scenario project. They are called 'scenarios' because they are like 'scenes' in the theatre - a series of differing views or presentations of the same general topic. Once you see several scenarios at the same time, you better understand your options or possibilities.

Objective:

- To test alternative (hypothetical) futures so as to make better choices today.

Desired Outcome:

- Three scenarios: a positive (or optimistic), negative (or pessimistic), and neutral (or middle of the road) scenario, allowing for a more realistic assessment of future possibilities which does not assume either the best or worst outcomes. The scenarios could also include an unlikely event but one that would have a large impact if it was to occur.

Uses/strengths:

- Avoids having to model complex situations.
- Allows you to alter combinations and play ‘what if’ games (e.g. change the assumption and see what happens).
- Provides understanding of events and possible combinations.

Special considerations/weaknesses:

- Agreement may not be reached on what is the ‘right’ scenario to include (if the questions are controversial).
- Scenarios must be recognised as possibilities only, not firm predictions.

Step by Step guide:

1. Invite participants who have knowledge of, or are affected by, the proposal or issue of interest.
2. Invite participants to identify the underlying paradigms or unwritten laws of change; trends or driving forces and collect into general categories (e.g. economy, socio/political and wildcards or uncertainties).
3. Consider how these might affect a situation, either singly or in combination, using these steps:
    - Review the big picture
    - Review general approaches to future studies
    - Identify what you know and what you don’t know
    - Select possible paradigm shifts and use them as an overall guide
    - Cluster trends and see which driving forces are most relevant to your scenario
4. Create alternative scenarios (similar to alternate scenes in a play) by mixing wildcards with trends and driving forces. Keep the number of scenarios small (four is ideal because it avoids the ‘either’ ‘or’ choice of two, and the good/bad/medium choice of three).
5. Write a brief report that states assumptions and future framework; provides observations and conclusions, gives a range of possibilities, and focuses on the next steps coming out of this study. Each scenario should be about one page.

SEARCH CONFERENCE

Engagement range	Inform/Consult/Partnership
Difficulty level	Medium to Hard
Cost	Medium ($1,000to $10,000) High (over $10,000)
When might you use it:	To communicate an issue To develop community capacity To develop action plan
Number of people required to help to organise:	A team of people (3-6) may be required
Time to organise	Medium (6 weeks to 6 months) Long (over 6 months)
Size of audience	Large (over 30)
Issues/resources to think about	Publicity; Venue; Furniture; Catering; Staffing; Moderator/facilitator; Overhead/data projectors and screen; Audiovisual recording equipment and amplification; Artists/photographer; Printed public information sheets; Props for working in groups (pens, paper, pins, etc.); Children's requirements; Response sheets
Innovation level	Medium to High

Description:

A search conference is a large-group task-oriented 'conversation'. Search conferences emphasise face-to-face interaction among stakeholders to create a new community. The process of meeting and discussion engenders new ideas. The venue and seating plan of the conference are designed to engender conversation and good relationship building. Search conferences have been used to help organisations to merge when they have differing visions and to bring together trade experts to develop curricula based on their tradecraft and skills. In a community setting, search conferences have allowed 'ordinary' citizens to use their local knowledge in developing plans for economically depressed regions. Search conferences are held over one or more full days, during which participants explore ambiguity and difference in the interests of forwarding research and action.

Objective:

- To identification of specific actions which ought to be taken.

Desired Outcome:

- Future plans or visions that are practical and can be implemented for an organisation

Uses/strengths:

- Develops creative and achievable strategies.

- Produces collaborative and participative approaches.
- Generates consensus.
- Develops shared values.
- Develops commitment to strategies formulated.
- Combines formulation and implementation.
- Integrates cultural, regional and/or value differences.
- Achieves completion of a task in two or three days (and sometimes evenings) that would take months if left to specialised analysts and experts.

Special considerations/weaknesses:

- Focus is on learning, not teaching.
- Conflict and differences are acknowledged, but not dealt with.
- Equal status of participants is supported.
- Personal commitment and ownership are emphasized.
- Self-managing teams are used.
- Shared meaning is developed.
- Can be logistically challenging.
- Can be time consuming (2–3 days).

Step by step guide:

Search conferences have three broad stages: pre-planning; the conference; and implementation.
Pre-planning:

1. First Planning Session: (6–8 hours). Determine whether a Search Conference will meet your needs. If it will, decide on the conference themes and purpose, arrange a venue and draw up an invitation list.
2. Secure keynote speakers. Their presence should break the ice and set the flavour of the event, but not dominate it.
3. Second Planning Session: (3–4 hours) This serves as a progress 'check-in' and a time to redirect efforts if necessary. Questions are answered and all conference plans are finalised. It is best to hold this session with the facilitator present, however, when travel costs are a major concern it is possible to substitute an extensive telephone conference call between the planning group and the facilitator.

The Conference:

4. The Search Conference: (1 full day or more). The participants will share information, discuss issues, and complete a series of small and large group tasks, which culminate in a strategic goal setting and action planning session. These tasks should encompass the following:
   - Analyse the environment (background, possible future, what is working/not working)
   - Analyse the 'SYSTEM', what routines, practices, restrictions, rules and structures influence the present known community issues, the community itself and its environment.
   - Plan how our system can best flourish, within our environment (this should develop realistic action plans engendered through new understandings).

Implementation:

5. Follow-up Session(s): This is a time to celebrate individual and group successes. Evaluate the ultimate success of the conference by how easily the action plans can be implemented. Progress is assessed and plans are modified as needed.
6. People are give roles and deadlines set.
7. The action plans are put into practice.

SHOPFRONT

Engagement range	Inform/Consult
Difficulty level	Medium
Cost	Medium ($1,000to $10,000)
When might you use it:	To showcase product, plan, policy To communicate an issue To discover community issues
Number of people required to help to organise:	A small team of people (3-6) may be required
Time to organise	Medium (6 weeks to 6 months) Long (over 6 months)
Size of audience	Large (over 30)
Issues/resources to think about	Publicity; Venue; Furniture; Catering; Staffing; Moderator/facilitator; Audiovisual recording equipment and amplification; Overhead/data projectors and screen; Printed public information materials; Props for working in groups (pens, paper, pins, etc.); Response sheets Children's requirements
Innovation level	Low to Medium

Description:

Shopfronts (or site offices) are attempts to improve participation in programsby bringing a participatory venue into a heavily used public area, such as a main street or shopping centre. They are designed to allow people to drop in at their convenience and therefore display materials are usually provided along with project staff to answer questions. They have a relaxed atmosphere and can act as a semi-permanent meeting place / kitchen table discussion forum so providing refreshments is recommended. Shop fronts run for the duration of a participation program. While many of the objectives and outcomes of shopfronts are similar to those of an open house, an open house is usually at an existing site or establishment, whereas shopfronts can be set up wherever they will attract the target audience. This may be in the main street, in a shopping centre, or in accommodation that is temporarily rented for the occasion.

Objective:

- To provide a temporary 'headquarters' where people can come for information or to see and talk to the people who are knowledgeable about or planning about an issue or project.

Desired Outcome:

- A better informed community, and allow people to feel greater ownership of a process, organisation or community.

Uses/strengths:

- To access participants who are not generally interested in formal participation programs.
- To improve public relations.
- For convenience.
- To facilitate informal participation.
- To locate project stakeholders.

Special considerations/weaknesses:

- Community members may not consider this a legitimate avenue to have a say.
- The shopfronts can be easily targeted by activists.

Step by step guide:

1. Select a centralised venue that has a lot of passer-by traffic. Usually owners of vacant shops are very happy to lease over short periods of time.
2. Select staff/volunteers with strong public relations skills and knowledge of the project and participatory processes (i.e. who will encourage people to chat and discuss issues and be aware of offering different feedback options).
3. Provide display materials, printed public information materials, technical reports, maps, photographs etc. that will be provide all sectors of the community with a means to understand the issues or proposals.
4. Advertise the variety of opportunities for public participation throughout the participation program.
5. Provide a variety of opportunities for feedback, including speaking person-to-person, filling in feedback sheets and contacting email/website addresses.
6. Provide adequate seating and consider visitors comfort (e.g. drinks, toilets, childcare, and accessibility).
7. Staff should record visits to document participation process and to note issues, concerns and suggestions and report these to the organisation/organisers.

SIMULATION (ELECTRONICALLY GENERATED)

Engagement range	Inform/Consult/Partnership
Difficulty level	Medium to Hard
Cost	Medium ($1,000to $10,000) High (over $10,000)
When might you use it:	To showcase product, plan, policy To communicate an issue To discover community issues To develop community capacity To develop action plan
Number of people required to help to organise:	A small team of people (3-6) may be required
Time to organise	Medium (6 weeks to 6 months) Long (over 6 months)
Size of audience	Large (over 30)
Issues/resources to think about	Staff; Computers; Publicity; Venue; Furniture; Catering; Moderator/facilitator; Artists/photographer; Audiovisual recording equipment and amplification; Overhead/data projectors and screen; Printed public information sheets; Props for working in groups (pens, paper, pins, etc.); Children's requirements; Response sheets
Innovation level	Medium to High

Description:

Simulations attempt to display the outcomes of particular choices through changing the inputs to a computer model that simulates the likely outcomes of a system with choices. Simulation can also be set up as games (e.g. the Quest Envision programs that encourage community participation through games where they make choices, are then given feedback on the consequences of those choices).

This participation method uses mathematical relationships to explain a system (e.g. the regulations to do with vegetation clearing and proposed changes to legislation) and then when it is understood, extrapolations into the future can be made. The overriding consideration is that you 'know and understand' the system you are trying to model. In relatively simple systems, or those that have been used a long time and have many revisions from experience (like current economic forecasting), the relationships can be modelled fairly accurately.

Two major components are:

- Knowing the relationships relative to what event is connected to what other event(s).
- The relative magnitude of that relationship.

In anything but a very simple model, the interactions and feedback loops (results of one step affect an earlier step) are very difficult to determine. This is especially true for models that predict more than a few years. For complex situations, it is nearly impossible to

model accurately both the relationships and their magnitude when appropriate feedback loops are considered.
Electronically generated simulations can be set up in such a way that they are accessible and understandable to the general public, or may be designed for technical and professional use in determining the consequences of a projected change in regulations or laws.

Objective:

- To give a ‘virtual trial run’ on a computer that allows the consequences to be observed and considered, and decisions made.

Desired Outcome:

- A chance to ‘trial’ a change and its consequences prior to implementation of those changes, without affecting the community or environment. Testing the consequences allows modification of suggested changes or innovations to produce a better outcome for the environment and community.

Uses/strengths:

- Gives better results, even with limitations, when you cannot make simple extrapolations or modify trends or non-linear processes.
- Offers the option to change the conditions and see what would happen under a variety of assumptions. The latter are `what if’ options, and you learn a great deal about the subject and its future possibilities by determining which changes cause what type (and how big) of an effect.

Special considerations/weaknesses:

- Model results are only as good as the model and the assumptions on which it is based.
- Very expensive to set up, including data for validation.
- Assumes an understanding of all variables.
- Need trained programmers and technical staff.

Step by step guide:

1. Collect background information on issue or scenario.
2. Determine as many factors and influences as possible, and possible/probable outcomes of changes.
3. With the assistance of programmers, set up model to allow simulations.
4. Invite representatives of relevant groups to view and discuss the scenarios.
5. Discuss understanding and insights gained.
6. If relevant, develop future planning options based on preferred scenarios.

SPEAKOUT (VERSION 1)

Engagement range	Inform/Consult
Difficulty level	Easy
Cost	Low (up to $1,000) Medium ($1,000to $10,000)
When might you use it:	To develop community capacity To communicate an issue To discover community issues
Number of people required to help to organise:	1-3 people
Time to organise	Medium (6 weeks to 6 months)
Size of audience	Medium (10-30) Large (over 30)
Issues/resources to think about	Publicity: Venue; Furniture; Catering; Staffing; Moderator/facilitator; audiovisual recording equipment and amplification; Overhead/data projectors and screen; Printed public information materials; Response sheets; Props for working in groups (pens, paper, pins, etc.); Children's requirements
Innovation level	Low to Medium

Description:

A speakout is an event where a group of people give testimony about a particular issue. The people speaking can be 'experts' giving factual information to educate the audience and media, or they can be lay people who are personally affected by the issue talking about their lives, or a combination of both.
Speakouts/soapboxes can be organised events or events that are arranged by participants. They are a venue for public comment and debate and are usually informal with a limited agenda. Formally organised Speakouts/soapboxes should be relaxed and should not attempt to steer a discussion and hence set an agenda.

Objective:

- To provide people with specific information on an issue.

Desired Outcome:

- A wider airing of views, and greater awareness of other people's contributions to a particular process or issue.

Uses/strengths:

- Useful when conflicting viewpoints exist.

- Useful when debate is required to refine understanding of issues.
- Useful when a particular group or individuals are affected by a project.
- Can educate.
- Allows organisers to meet people and develop networks.

Special considerations/weaknesses:

- Can be difficult to direct (often speak outs occur because groups feel their voices are not being heard).
- Popular with activists, and may not have a balance of opinions.
- The discussion may be difficult to incorporate into a formal consultation program.

Step by step guide:

1. Identify the issue of interest.
2. Book venue and invite experts.
3. Publicise speak out/soapbox.
4. Take care of legal and other responsibilities.
5. Hire facilitator.
6. Organise recorders.
7. Explain time limits to each speaker (five minutes maximum).
8. After the event, prepare statement/report for media and authorities.

SPEAKOUT (VERSION 2)

Engagement range	Inform/Consult
Difficulty level	Easy
Cost	Low (up to $1,000)
When might you use it:	To develop community capacity To communicate an issue To develop action plan To build alliances, consensus
Number of people required to help to organise:	1-3 people
Time to organise	Short (up to 6 weeks) Medium (6 weeks to 6 months)
Size of audience	Large (over 30)
Issues/resources to think about	Venue (e.g. library, hall, tent, sheltered outside place; Staffing; Furniture Props for working in groups (pens, paper, pins, etc.)
Innovation level	Low to Medium

Description:

This speakout variation was designed by Wendy Sarkission to ensure that "all the voices are heard". In this version, the main emphasis is on establishing an environment in which individuals feel comfortable and able to give their views on a range of topics. All community members are invited to attend the nominated venue and give their view on the selected topics. Their input is documented and later collated and circulated. It is a productive and useful alternative to a public meeting in which only a few people are given the opportunity to actually speak, the majority there only to listen. They are particularly useful where there are a number of sub-topics around a main theme or issue affecting a wide number of stakeholders.
The two major elements are:

- A 'listener' and a 'scribe' is allocated for each sub-topic.
- The venue is open over a period of time or series of times (such as a weekend and some evenings).

Whilst there might be information made available about the theme for the event, the main purpose is to hear what stakeholders views are about the sub-topics. They are not a mechanism for trying to convince stakeholders of a particular viewpoint.

Objective:

- To make comment on a topic in a safe and friendly environment

Desired Outcome:

- Organisers get to hear a wide variety of views around a number of topics or subtopics of an issue, while members of the community get to be heard.

Uses/strengths:

- Use instead of a public meeting.
- Great for getting people's input.
- Good to demonstrate that people have been listened to.

Special considerations/weaknesses:

- Needs 'facilitators' as the listeners and scribes, not specialists on the topic.
- Best if another person is available to type up topics 'on the go' rather than waiting to the end of the session.
- Credibility can be compromised by people wanting to use the event to promote a particular point of view. These can be organisers as well as associated special interest groups wanting to 'set up a stall'. This is not the place unless carefully structured.

Step by step guide:

1. The organisers identify a number of 'hot' issues or topics that they would like members of the community to consider and have input into.
2. A suitable location, such as a hall, library or other accessible public place is rented for a period of time(e.g. one or two days).
3. A table and flip chart is provided for each topic, together with a 'listener' and a 'scribe'. This is most important, and comprises the largest organisational part of the project.
4. The event is advertised, and members of the public invited to attend at their convenience over the allocated time.
5. Community members go to each topic table that interests them, the listener 'actively listens' to what they have to say, with the scribe writing it down on the flip chart. No attempt is made to enter into a dialogue around the topic, the role of the listener being to ensure that the participant remains 'on topic', and expresses their view for the scribe to write it down.
6. At the end of the time period, the comments collected from all participants are 'themed' by the organisers, and the results distributed.

STAKEHOLDER ANALYSIS (STAKEHOLDER MATRIX)

Engagement range	Inform
Difficulty level	Medium
Cost	Low (up to $1,000)
When might you use it:	To gain an understanding of the stakeholders To gain an understanding of the likely risks/issues/problems
Number of people required to help to organise:	Can be undertaken by a single person
Time to organise	Short (up to 6 weeks) Medium (6 weeks to 6 months)
Size of audience	Small (up to 10) Medium (11-30) Large (over 30)
Issues/resources to think about	Paper; Stakeholder Matrix (see above)
Innovation level	Low to Medium

Description:

Stakeholder analysis is an essential part of developing a useful Engagement Plan. A common method of stakeholder analysis is a Stakeholder Matrix. This is where stakeholders are plotted against two variables. These variables might be plotting the level of 'stake' in the outcomes of the project against 'resources' of the stakeholder. Another is the 'importance' of the stakeholder against the 'influence' of the stakeholder. The concept is the same, though the emphasis is slightly different. Boxes A, B and C are the key stakeholders of the project. The implications of each box is summarised below:

Table 1: Stakeholder Matrix

<table>
<tr><td colspan="2" rowspan="2"></td><td colspan="4">Importance of Stakeholders</td></tr>
<tr><td>Unknown</td><td>Little/No Importance</td><td>Some Importance</td><td>Important</td></tr>
<tr><td rowspan="4">Influence of Stakeholders</td><td>Significant Influence</td><td colspan="2" rowspan="2">Box C</td><td colspan="2" rowspan="2">Box A</td></tr>
<tr><td>Somewhat Influential</td></tr>
<tr><td>Little/No Influence</td><td colspan="2" rowspan="2">Box D</td><td colspan="2" rowspan="2">Box B</td></tr>
<tr><td>Unknown</td></tr>
</table>

Box A

These are stakeholders appearing to have a high degree of influence on the project, who are also of high importance for its success. This implies that the implementing organisation will need to construct good working relationships with these stakeholders, to ensure an effective coalition of support for the project. Examples might be the senior officials and politicians or trade unions.

Box B

These are stakeholders of high importance to the success of the project, but with low influence. This implies that they will require special initiatives if their interests are to be protected. An example may be traditionally marginalised groups (e.g. Indigenous people, youth, seniors), who might be beneficiaries of a new service, but who have little 'voice' in its development.

Box C

These are stakeholders with high influence, who can therefore affect the project outcomes, but whose interests are not necessarily aligned with the overall goals of the project. They might be financial administrators, who can exercise considerable discretion over funding disbursements. This conclusion implies that these stakeholders may be a source of significant risk, and they will need careful monitoring and management.

Box D

The stakeholders in this box, with low influence on, or importance to the project objectives, may require limited monitoring or evaluation, but are of low priority.

Objective:

- To provide a clearer understanding of stakeholders and, as a result, provide insights as to how best to engage them.

Desired Outcome:

- Better community engagement plans and project outcomes.

Uses/strengths:

- Use for projects either in the early stages, or with a group developing a stakeholder plan. Not as rigorous or as time consuming as a 'CLIP' analysis.

Special considerations/weaknesses:

- All analytical tools are only models. The tool is dependant on subjective data, and will vary according to the person and situation being used. It should probably not be a public document.

Step by step guide:

1. Make a list of all stakeholders.
2. Write the name of each stakeholder on a post-it note or index card.
3. Rank the stakeholders on a scale of one to five, according to one of the criteria on the matrix, such as 'interest in the project outcomes' or 'interest in the subject'.
4. Keeping this ranking for one of the criteria, plot the stakeholders against the other criteria of the matrix. This is where using post-it notes or removable cards are useful.

5. Ask the following questions:
    - Are there any surprises?
    - Which stakeholders do we have the most/least contact with?
    - Which stakeholders might we have to make special efforts to ensure engagement?

STAKEHOLDER ANALYSIS (VENN DIAGRAMS)

Engagement range	Inform
Difficulty level	Medium
Cost	Low (up to $1,000)
When might you use it:	To gain an understanding of the stakeholders To gain an understanding of the likely risks/issues/problems
Number of people required to help to organise:	Can be undertaken by a single person
Time to organise	Short (up to 6 weeks) Medium (6 weeks to 6 months)
Size of audience	Small (up to 10) Medium (11-30) Large (over 30)
Issues/resources to think about	Coloured card circles, about five sizes, five of each size, ranging from 50mm to 300mm diameter
Innovation level	Low to Medium

<u>Description:</u>

Stakeholder analysis is an essential part of developing a useful Engagement Plan. Venn diagrams are a simple tool to provide a visual 'map' of the relationships between stakeholders. Used either on its own, or as part of a broader stakeholder analysis, this technique can provide useful insights for a project development team. It is especially useful when working in a facilitated group, as it allows group members the opportunity to discuss their individual understandings of the relationships between stakeholders, and come to a common understanding.

<u>Objective:</u>

- To provide a visual image of the relationships between stakeholders.

<u>Desired Outcome:</u>

- A better understanding of the influence and relationships between stakeholders in a project.

<u>Uses/strengths:</u>

- When working with a group developing a project it is especially useful in generating discussion around on the topic of relationships between stakeholders.
- Time efficient.

<u>Special considerations/weaknesses:</u>

- Allow an hour creating the various card circles in advance.

Step by step guide:

1. Make a list of all stakeholders.
2. Rank stakeholders on a scale of one to five according to a common criteria, such as 'interest in the project outcomes' or 'interest in the subject'.
3. Write the name of each stakeholder on the card circle that corresponds to the importance of the stakeholder. The more important, the larger the circle.
4. Take two of the largest circles, and place them to illustrate the level of relationship between them. If no relationship, the circles will be separate. If a slight relationship, one will overlap the other a small amount. If a high relationship, they will almost cover each other. Working from the largest to the smallest, keep adding each card circle in such a way that it illustrates the relationships between it and the other stakeholders. Questions that the map can be used to elicit answers being:
    - Are there any surprises?
    - Which stakeholders have the most influence?
    - Which stakeholders do we have the most/least contact with?
    - Which stakeholders might we have to make special efforts to ensure engagement?

SUBMISSIONS

Engagement range	Inform/Consult
Difficulty level	Medium
Cost	Low (up to $1,000) Medium ($1,000to $10,000)
When might you use it:	To showcase product, plan, policy To communicate an issue To discover community issues
Number of people required to help to organise:	1-3 people
Time to organise	Medium (6 weeks to 6 months) Long (over 6 months)
Size of audience	Large (over 30)
Issues/resources to think about	Staff/volunteers
Innovation level	Low

Description:

Submissions are intended to allow participants to respond to proposals or ideas in some detail. They are used widely in urban planning development decisions and are intended to allow interested parties to make detailed responses to development proposals in this context. They can be used in a broader context to allow the community to have their say or present their ideas in written detail. Submissions may be in the form of a letter, a short document or a substantial paper. They may include appendices and other supporting documents. The best submissions are those that provide reasons and justifications for specific comments.

Objective:

- To obtain a detailed response to a proposal.

Desired Outcome:

- More detailed information on which to base planning or development decisions.

Uses/strengths:

- Allows a group to provide details of their position on an issue.
- Can satisfy statutory or legal requirements.
- Allows people to have a say.
- Review of written response submissions helps get a sense of the range of concerns of interested parties, their contact details and a mailing list for subsequent project information.

Special considerations/weaknesses:

- They are passive in nature. The communication is one way and there is no chance for discussion.
- They are mainly used by persons with a significant stake in a project.
- Requires time and energy, often with short timelines, which may discourage under-resourced community groups.
- Communication is limited to the written form.
- Is not well used as a participation tool.
- With the advent of electronic submissions, avoid sending multiple submissions.

Step by step guide:

1. Keep an alert for calls for submissions from government departments or other organisations responsible for management decisions in areas of direct concern to your community. Any individual or organisation can make a submission to a parliamentary committee.
2. When possible, designate a group to work on the submission and allow plenty of time to develop a well thought out, clearly argued statement of your position, with explanations and reasons for the attitudes and positions adopted.
3. Ensure your submission meets the terms of reference in the call for submission.
4. Check the requested format (e.g. the Australian Government requests that submissions be printed on A4 paper, electronic submission on disc or CD-ROM in Microsoft Word). In printed submissions, include a cover page with a title that clearly indicates what your submission is about, the full name of your organisation, and contact details(return address and telephone numbers). On the next page, include a brief summary of the main points in the submission. Submissions should be signed, and clearly indicate whether the individual is signing on behalf of an organisation, or submitting a personal opinion. Add any helpful documentation in an appendix.
5. If a request for submissions has a very short lead time, consider what you can do. One page with your key concerns (with explanations) and your preferred outcome, is better than no communication at all.
6. Ensure that submissions are delivered to the correct address and by the due date.
7. Request feedback on the submission process, and any decision and outcomes that result.

SURVEYS

Engagement range	Consult
Difficulty level	Medium to Hard
Cost	Medium ($1,000to $10,000) High (over $10,000)
When might you use it:	To discover community issues To communicate an issue
Number of people required to help to organise:	1-3 people
Time to organise	Medium (6 weeks to 6 months) Long (over 6 months)
Size of audience	Large (over 30)
Issues/resources to think about	Staff/volunteers
Innovation level	Low

Description:

Surveys are a method used to collect information from a specific population. Surveys are used to gauge the level of public information about an issue and provide a 'snapshot' of attitudes and ideas at a particular time. They can be used to determine community attitudes or target a particular group. Surveys can be used to collect broad general information from or about a large audience or specific information from targeted groups. Surveys can seek information that can be quantitative (facts and figures) and/or qualitative(opinions and values). Surveys can use questionnaires to collect information, and these can be delivered through face-to-face interviews, self-completion written forms, telephone surveys, or electronic surveys. (See also Questionnaires and Response Sheets) For a well-conducted survey using a large, random sample, surveys are usually high cost. Small-scale surveys using opportunistic sampling and volunteers can be relatively low cost, but may not produce results that can be generalised beyond the specific people sampled. Sampling so that you can generalise from your results to the general community or a specific segment of the community requires expert knowledge.

Objective:

- To collect information from community groups in relation to a particular issue or issue. The results of the surveys provide information about the demographics and/or opinions of a specific group of people. This information can permit decision-making bodies to make better informed decisions or to better inform the community in relation to an issue or proposal.

Desired Outcome:

- Information about a community and its opinions (e.g. a survey can indicate the number of people who support or oppose specific proposals, their reasons and their demographics).

Uses/strengths:

- Provides traceable data.
- Can serve an educational purpose.
- When properly constructed using good sampling techniques can reach a broad, representative public or targeted group.
- Can derive varied information from the results.
- Can help in future planning.

Special considerations/weaknesses:

- Poorly constructed surveys produce poor results.
- Can be expensive if surveying a large audience.
- Care must be taken that wording of questions is unambiguous to prevent skewed results.
- Care is needed in sampling to make sure representative samples are taken.
- Surveys with tick boxes are the fastest and easiest to process, however this limits the detail in the information collected.
- Can be seen as 'counting heads' without necessarily telling you what is in them.

Step by step guide:

1. Find out what is already known, and what relevant surveys are being done or planned elsewhere. This will avoid duplication, and will help establish what you need to find out from your survey.
2. Talk to locals with strong views and local knowledge to sharpen the focus of the questions.
3. Survey writing is a skill that improves with practice and feedback, so seek expert advice on the pitfalls and requirements of survey writing, but rely on your own understanding of the issue or topic.
4. Preliminary investigations (e.g. focus groups or interviews) with people on a 'convenience' basis (outside the Town Hall, or in a shopping centre) can help to develop some of the issues/range of questions needed.
5. Determine how the information is to be obtained. Surveys can be done by asking people questions through the mail (see Questionnaires) in personal interviews, or by a combination of methods.
6. Select your target audience. How will you sample them? Who in the community or organisation do you need to reach? How will you ensure that your survey gives a representation of the ideas of the group?
7. Draft the questionnaire or interview guide.
8. Trial this with a pilot study to ensure the answers will give you the information you wanted (check readability and clarity of questions).
9. Undertake the survey.
10. Collate and analyse the results.
11. Write a report and make available to those surveyed to appropriate authorities and to the media. If the report is lengthy and/or detailed, provide a synopsis of the key points.

TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE

Engagement range	Inform/Consult
Difficulty level	Medium to Hard
Cost	Medium ($1,000to $10,000) High (over $10,000)
When might you use it:	To showcase product, plan, policy To communicate an issue To discover community issues
Number of people required to help to organise:	1-3 people
Time to organise	Short (up to 6 weeks) Medium (6 weeks to 6 months)
Size of audience	Large (over 30)
Issues/resources to think about	Suitably trained and knowledgeable staff; Publication facilities for reports/publications; Telephone/computer communications facilities
Innovation level	Low

Description:

Technical assistance is intended to provide the public with understanding complex issues and concepts. Publicising the availability of technical assistance adds transparency and positive public relations to a public participation process. Often technical issues associated with a project are complex and stakeholders require one-on-one discussions to improve their understanding or gain information.

Objective:

- to provide accurate and informed advice on complex issues and concepts.

Desired Outcome:

- Consistent, accurate information that increases community understanding of an issue or proposal.

Uses/strengths:

- Builds credibility and helps address public concerns.
- Can be effective as a conflict resolution technique where facts are clarified.
- Assists in the dissemination of information.

Special considerations/weaknesses:

- Availability of resources can be limited.

- Technical experts may resent working with members of the community.
- Can be costly if outside experts are required to provide assistance.

Step by step guide:

1. Advertise the name of the person providing technical assistance and their specialisation so the public can directly access the person (at predetermined times) and discuss the issue to improve understanding.
2. Brief staff and train in public consultation. They need to be polite, courteous and patient with all callers, regardless of their attitude or level of understanding.

TECHNICAL REPORTS AND DISCUSSION PAPERS

Engagement range	Inform/Consult
Difficulty level	Hard (specialist skills required)
Cost	Medium ($1,000to $10,000) High (over $10,000)
When might you use it:	To communicate an issue
Number of people required to help to organise:	Small (3-6) to large (over 6) team of people
Time to organise	Medium (6 weeks to 6 months) Long (over 6 months)
Size of audience	Large (over 30)
Issues/resources to think about	Venue; Catering; Staffing; Moderator/facilitator; Overhead/data projectors and screen; Props for working in groups (pens, paper, pins, etc.); Children's requirements Staff; Printed public information materials; Access to layout and publication expertise/facilities (reports produced for public access should be as brief as possible and include a balance of words/illustrations/maps)
Innovation level	Low

Description:

Technical reports can outline research and policy findings, and can also be used to outline proposals. The most popular format is the discussion paper which, when combined with calls for submissions, can provide both information and public input. Consultation activities often require plain language documents that ensure technical information is presented comprehensively to a wide range of stakeholders. Technical reports are widely used for this purpose.

Objective:

- To provide detailed information on complex or technical issues.

Desired Outcome:

- Background information that can be used in making decisions about complex issues, or that allows good quality, accurate information to be provided to those members of the community who are interested or affected by a proposal or issue.

Uses/strengths:

- Can provide a large number of people and organisations with information.
- Can be well thought out and prepared by those with considerable knowledge, interest and expertise in the issue.

- Provides for a thorough explanation of project issues.

Special considerations/weaknesses:

- Some participants may find the reports too detailed.
- Can be costly to produce.
- Unless clearly written, can cause confusion.
- Generic nature may not make it relevant to local issues.
- Cannot ensure people have received, read or understood the information.
- Some people are not comfortable responding in writing.
- Time consuming to develop.
- Time allowances for people to prepare responses.
- Follow up consultation activities are generally required.

Step by step guide:

1. Consider the target audience, the agency or group budget, and production costs to determine the appropriate media via which to distribute the report (e.g. internet, print or CD-ROM).
2. Prepare mailing list, in accordance with access to addresses and the scope of the mail-out.
3. Prepare the reports and discussion papers using simple language with an emphasis on visual communication.
4. Publicise the availability of the reports and/or discussion papers. If options are available, ask in what form (email, print, website address or CD-ROM) the person would like to receive the material.
5. Provide opportunities for submission of responses, that is, allow sufficient time for detailed consideration and development of responses, and provide a variety of ways for the responses to be delivered (post, drop off points, or email).
6. Provide contact details for people with queries.
7. Advise on the opportunities for participation.
8. Collate and monitor responses.

TELEPHONE TREES

Engagement range	Inform/Consult
Difficulty level	Easy
Cost	Low (up to $1,000)
When might you use it:	To showcase product, plan, policy To communicate an issue To discover community issues To develop action plan
Number of people required to help to organise:	A small team of people may be required (3 -5 people)
Time to organise	Medium (6 weeks to 6 months) Long (over 6 months)
Size of audience	Large (over 30)
Issues/resources to think about	Staff or volunteers; Telephone; Agreed lists of names and phone numbers
Innovation level	Low

Description:

Telephone trees allow a message to be conveyed by a number of people simultaneously when it is necessary to speak to a large number of people quickly about an event, issue or proposal. Telephone trees rely on each person on a committee undertaking to telephone a number of specific people. These may be those people who cannot be reached by email, or those who check their email infrequently but who need to know urgently. If one person calls 10 people, and each of those 10 call another 10 people, you can reach a hundred people with only two 'rounds' of calls. Another way of organising a telephone tree is for each person to agree to telephone one person, and that person telephones one person, and so on, so that the message is spread sequentially, and no one person has to spend their time or money making a number of calls. An agreed message can then be spread quite quickly, and the expense and/or time involved in telephoning can be shared by all members of the committee. Electronic telephone tree products are now available commercially that provide organisations with the opportunity to deliver information to each member of a group with the push of a button. The telephone then automatically continues to dial and deliver the messages to each of the designated numbers. The main drawback is that the automated voice delivers the message regardless of who picks up the telephone, and there is no way of ensuring that the message gets to the intended recipient. As well, an electronic message option which allows a large number of telephones to be reached is sending messages from one computer to a number of mobile telephones using text messaging. This is helpful where a team of workers all have mobile telephones out in the field.

Objective:

- To reach a number of people by telephone in the shortest possible time.

Desired Outcome:

- Ensures that people have been given a message or piece of information, so that there is a clear understanding of the issue, and of how many people have been informed.

Uses/strengths:

- Allows a group to reach all those who need quick notification of an event or proposal, and to reach them quickly by telephone.
- Can allow a quick survey of people's responses to the event or proposal at the same time that people are notified.
- Ensures that people have heard about an important event, because you have immediate confirmation when you speak to them.
- Can be useful in community emergencies (e.g. closure of schoolscaused by severe weather conditions).

Special considerations/weaknesses:

- This is more costly and time consuming than sending one email to an electronic mailing list.
- Telephoning may involve some time if the caller has to keep calling until they reach their targeted audience.
- Electronic telephone trees deliver their messages via an automated voice which may not reach the desired recipient.

Step by step guide:

1. Decide if the issue or proposal is important enough to require urgent notification.
2. If urgent notification is required, you might combine email mailing lists and telephone trees to reach all affected people.
3. Starting with a core group or organising committee, agree on who will telephone whom, and ensure that names and telephone numbers are correct.
4. If in a work situation, people may telephone from their own desks or in an emergency or polling situation, a bank of telephones may be set up with operators working through their agreed lists. If in a volunteer situation, volunteers may telephone from their own homes or from an organisation's office or shopfront.
5. When all those on the list have been telephoned, and especially when it is vital that all those affected are reached, callers should report back to the organising committee who can take other steps to contact anyone who has not been able to be reached.

VISIONING

Engagement range	Inform/Consult/Partnership
Difficulty level	Medium
Cost	Medium ($1,000to $10,000)
When might you use it:	To develop community capacity To communicate an issue To develop action plan To build alliances, consensus To discover community issues
Number of people required to help to organise:	1-3 people
Time to organise	Medium (6 weeks to 6 months) Long (over 6 months)
Size of audience	Large (over 30)
Issues/resources to think about	Recorders; Resources for group participation; (paper/pens/tables/chairs); Food
Innovation level	High

Description:

Visioning exercises are used to define and help achieve a desirable future. Visioning exercises are regularly used in urban and strategic planning and allow participants to create images that can help to guide change in the city. The outcome of a visioning exercise is a long term plan, generally with a 20-30 year horizon. Visioning exercises also provide a frame for a strategy for the achievement of the vision. Alternatively, some visioning tools may be used to promote thought and encourage discussion of future land use and planning options, without the need to create a future orientated document. Games can be developed to do this, for instance, the Wheel of Coastal Fortune, a game in which participants post cards to decide where facilities will be sited, is a planning exercise which encourages a holistic approach to planning and considering the impacts from the whole catchment area on the coastal zone (See also Scenario Testing).

Objective:

- To develop a preferred future scenario.

Desired Outcome:

- Future scenarios; together with the steps that are needed to achieve this vision, and a group of participants who have ownership of the vision, and therefore have a reason to help make this happen.

Uses/strengths:

- Use when integration between issues is required.
- Use when a wide variety of ideas should be heard • Use when a range of potential solutions are needed.
- Visioning encourages participation for developing a long-range plan.

- Visioning is an integrated approach to policy-making. With overall goals in view, it helps avoid piecemeal and reactionary approaches to addressing problems. Visioning uses participation as a source of ideas in the establishment of long-range policy. It draws upon deeply-held feelings about overall directions of public agencies to solicit opinions about the future.
- When completed, visioning presents a democratically-derived consensus.

<u>Special considerations/weaknesses:</u>

- Organisation of the visioning exercise can be costly.
- Vision can be difficult to transfer into strategy and policy

<u>Step by step guide:</u>

In a typical visioning exercise a facilitator asks participants to close their eyes and imagine they are walking along their shoreline as they would like to see it in 15 years. What do they see? What do the buildings look like? Where do people gather? How do they make decisions? What are they eating? Where are they working? How are they travelling? What is happening on the street? Where is the centre of the neighbourhood? How does green-space and water fit into the picture? What do you see when you walk around after dark? People record their visions in written or pictorial form; in diagrams, sketches, models, photographic montages, and in written briefs. Sometimes a professional illustrator helps turn mental images into drawings of the city that people can extend and modify. To play games such as Wheel of Coastal Fortune, which promote thought and encourage discussion of future land use and planning options without developing any documentation, the following steps are taken:

1. The kit can be borrowed from the developer of the game, Katrina Luckie, or, with enough preparation time and funds, you could make your own.
2. Develop a map of the coastal zone beginning in the hinterland and flowing down to the sea. This should be sturdy and able to be transported for frequent use, and may be in the form of a patchwork rug, or a model in segments.
3. Develop cards that indicate the facilities likely to be proposed for the area (e.g. national parks, native forest, high-rise development, tourist developments, sewerage outlets, shopping centres, wetlands reserves, etc.) Develop boxes or cans into which these cards can be slotted, marked with the various natural resources of the region (e.g. island, wetlands, native forest, town, beach, forested hills, etc) with two less receptacles than there are cards. Two cards will be jettisoned by each player.
4. Ask for volunteers, and provide each with a full range of cards to 'post' and invite them to consider how they will match the facilities with the most suitable environments. They may throw out two cards each, and can post only one card per environment (can).
5. Once people have made their choices, record what was placed in each site, and invite the group to comment on these choices.
6. Invite the participants to discuss what was easy and what was difficult about the process, what they learned, and how they might use the game in the future.

WEBSITES

Engagement range	Inform/Consult
Difficulty level	Hard (specialist skill needed)
Cost	Medium ($1,000to $10,000) High (over $10,000)
When might you use it:	To showcase product, plan, policy To communicate an issue
Number of people required to help to organise:	1-3 people
Time to organise	Medium (6 weeks to 6 months)
Size of audience	Large (over 30)
Issues/resources to think about	Staff; Internet access; Web design skills
Innovation level	Low

Description:

World wide websites that contain project information, announcements and documents can use various media formats. The array of computer software and graphics packages and capacity of the internet as a publicity tool and information source and forum for public input or electronic democracy is expanding, increasing the application of this participatory tool. Websites are particularly useful for people in remote areas accessing project information and are more effective than information repositories in this regard. As well, websites make ideal community noticeboards for small organisations and provide sources for interaction when they invite feedback and provide email addresses or chat options. They are readily updateable and can be used to dispatch information with relative ease. The internet and websites are emerging consultation tools and their applications and number of users continues to expand. (See also Electronic Democracy).

Objective:

- To make information available, freely and in forms that are easily accessible (click and go information, multimedia options for accessing information, and/or the option of collecting and/or providing feedback)

Desired Outcome:

- The chance to inform a wider range of people about issues and to invite the website visitors to become involved in some way.

Uses/strengths:

- Can provide publicity, information and limited public input.
- Capable of reaching very large numbers with enormous amounts of information.
- Offers a low cost way of distributing larger documents.
- Offers a highly accessible forum for posting project updates.

Special considerations/weaknesses:

- Many people still cannot access the web.
- Many people are still not web-literate.
- Its success as a participatory tool is still relatively unknown.
- Information overload and poor design can prevent people from finding what they need.

Step by step guide:

1. Contact a web designer, or find someone within the organisation with web design skills.
2. Discuss the ‘architecture’ - all the levels of information, links and illustrations available and necessary to inform and engage the user.
3. Do some background research, web-surfing in your chosen area or field. Discover what works well on other websites, what they cover, what they omit, and use this information to improve your own website.
4. Trial the website before releasing it to the public. A bad experience with a website can mean people do not return. Ensure all links are working, and that the material scrolls smoothly with minimum delays.
5. Launch the website with suitable coverage in the media, in newsletters, and in a public forum.
6. Ensure that you have alternative communication options for those who are not web-literate or do not have access to the internet.
7. Place the website address on all correspondence and other printed material from the organisation.

WORKSHOPS

Engagement range	Inform/Consult/Partnership
Difficulty level	Medium
Cost	Low (up to $1,000) Medium ($1,000to $10,000)
When might you use it:	To showcase product, plan, policy To communicate an issue To discover community issues To develop community capacity To develop action plan To build alliances, consensus
Number of people required to help to organise:	1-3 people
Time to organise	Medium (6 weeks to 6 months)
Size of audience	Small (up to 10) Medium (11-30)
Issues/resources to think about	Venue; Catering; Staffing; Moderator/facilitator; Overhead/data projectors and screen; Audiovisual recording equipment and amplification; Artists/photographer; Props for working in groups (pens, paper, pins, etc.); Printed public information sheets; Children's requirements; Response sheets; Publicity; Furniture
Innovation level	Low to Medium

Description:

Workshops are a structured forum where people are invited to work together in a group (or groups) on a common problem or task. They are best used with smaller numbers of participants.

The goals are to resolve issues and build consensus for action, rather than provide information and answer people's questions. If the workshop is intended as a community event focusing on a community issue, the selection of participants is determined by knowledge, expertise or by selecting a cross-section of views. Alternatively, workshops can be organised to target particular groups (e.g. young people, or women).

Workshops require a facilitator who is able to engage all participants in the discussion.

Objectives:

- To bring participants together in a structured environment (that is, through large and small-group activities, discussions, and reflection) to plan, decide or overcome difficulties.

Desired Outcome:

- A report, opinions, suggestions or plans that have been collaboratively developed and agreed to by all participants, on an issue or proposal.

Uses/strengths:

- Excellent for discussion on criteria or analysis of alternatives.
- Fosters small group or one-on-one communication.
- Offers a choice of team members to answer difficult questions.
- Builds ownership and credibility for the outcomes.
- Maximises feedback obtained from participants.

Special considerations/weaknesses:

- Excellent for discussion on criteria or analysis of alternatives.
- Fosters small group or one-on-one communication.
- Ability to draw on other team members to answer difficult questions.
- Builds credibility.
- Maximised feedback obtained from participants.
- Fosters public ownership in solving the problem.
- Hostile participants may resist what they may perceive as the 'divide and conquer' strategy of breaking into small groups.
- Facilitators need to know how they will use the public input before they begin the workshop.
- Several small group facilitators are usually needed.

Step by step guide:

Responsibility of the organiser:

1. Engage and brief facilitator. Brief to comprise:
    - Date, time and expected duration of workshop.
    - Description of target participants.
    - Relationships between participants.
    - Topic to be considered.
    - Clear definition of current situation, including decisions already made.
    - Area of topic to be covered, with the questions and problems requiring participants to be involved in and developing solutions.
2. Identify and book appropriate location (including wall space for posting notes and cards, tea/coffee area, required break-out areas), tables and chairs.
3. Arrange suitable catering.
4. Arrange transport/child care/special facilities for target participants.
5. Supply of special equipment.
6. Approve facilitators running sheet design.
7. Enable and ensure target participants attend.
8. Introduce the facilitator on the day.

Responsibility of the facilitator

1. Collect brief from organiser
2. Ensure that participants are not expected to be ‘rubber stamping’ decisions already made, (other than confirming those decisions), or being expected to provide unrealistic outputs for the time available.
3. Detail design of the day, identifying what participants will be required to consider, and methodology for this to be achieved (running sheet).
4. Ensure that organiser has carried out all functional aspects as above.
5. Run the event.
6. Write up and provide organiser with proceedings within agreed timeline.

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