VMC Civic Participation Kit

This kit has tools to assist community involvement in decisions that affect them. Good practice civic participation helps to determine policy options and services that work, saving time and money.

VICTORIAN
multicultural
commission
strengthening our community

VICTORIA
State
Government

This is an evergreen document, to be updated in line with system and process change. To inform updates please contact the Victorian Multicultural Commission using the contact details at the foot of this page.

How to use the VMC Civic Participation Kit

Engaging communities is about involving people and giving everyone an opportunity to participate.

SECTION 1

NEW TO ENGAGEMENT?

▶ Begin at **Section 1** and work through the whole guide.

▶ This section gives you the story behind the kit and how you can use it to engage multicultural communities.

SECTION 2

CONFIDENT IN ENGAGEMENT?

▶ **Section 2** has checklist 'tools' to help you.

▶ This section will help you to plan, run and evaluate your own community engagement events.

SECTION 3

LOOKING FOR ENGAGEMENT IDEAS?

▶ **Section 3** includes additional resources and information.

▶ Sometimes you need to go to the community and meet them where they are.

Civic participation and multicultural communities

▶ The real-life experiences of residents can add value to formal decision making.

▶ Giving people options to participate allows a broad and diverse range of views to be captured.

▶ Internationally there is a push to involve people in the decisions that affect their lives; to encourage active citizenship as a vital aspect of planning projects and formal decision making.[1]

▶ Victoria is home to one of the most culturally diverse societies in the world. Almost half (49.1%) of all Victorians were either born overseas or one or both parents were born overseas.[2]

▶ Community engagement is about working together and talking things over - decision makers and community members.

▶ The principles and practices within this kit can be applied universally to encourage inclusive community engagement.

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1   Victorian Auditor-General's Office, 2017.

2   Persons born overseas are 1st generation Australian; persons with one or both parents born overseas are 2nd generation Australian. Australian Bureau of Statistics, Census of Population and Housing 2016.

Foreword

Why was this toolkit conceived? The simple answer is controversy, which arose from a planning application to construct a mosque in the regional city of Bendigo in October 2015, which drew the ire of a significant number of local residents. It resulted in a series of highly publicised protests, which were themselves unique, because they attracted protesters from far right groups across Australia. The event even drew international media coverage.

The Victorian Multicultural Commission (VMC) is the primary conduit between multicultural communities and government and as such had a significant role to play at this time. Our community engagement was far reaching, with both supporters and some of the most strident objectors sitting around the table. The learnings were steep, and through our VMC-commissioned research one of the most important conclusions reached was the need for as many citizens as possible to have their voice heard in this noisy debate.

At the heart of the protests lay fear, myths and misconceptions, confusion around urbanisation numbers and planning rules, issues around immigration and identity politics. The protests became a divisive marker across this significant regional centre.

It began as a planning protest, but over time the events in Bendigo signalled the collective need of citizens to be involved in matters which they felt posed a threat to their personal security, their religious values, well-being and community cohesion.

The events at Bendigo provided a catalyst for a much deeper discussion about how civil society manages a broad range of views, and how we can facilitate a more inclusive approach to these discussions.

Ultimately it's about all us having an equal right to belong to our respective communities, regardless of faith, culture or background. Inclusive communities are built when our individual rights are respected. We hope this civic participation kit is a good start.

In the words of Professor Brene Brown, "Belonging is the innate human desire to be part of something that is larger than us. Because true belonging can only happen when we present our authentic, imperfect selves to the world, our sense of belonging can never be greater than our level of self-acceptance."

Helen Kapalos

Helen Kapalos
Chairperson, Victorian Multicultural Commission

About this Resource

As a multicultural society how can we be inclusive in formal decision making? We hope that the *VMC Civic Participation Kit* answers some of the issues this question raises about inclusion and cultural diversity. We know that inadequate consultation - not including a diversity of views - results in poor-quality decisions, increased financial costs and undermines public trust.[3]

Civic engagement covers activities such as consultation, information, communication, education, public participation and working in partnership. The terms 'engagement' and 'participation' are used throughout this resource as inclusive terms, meaning representation of all cultures and sub-sets within the community.

Although we designed this resource with civic decision makers in mind - including Councillors, Executive and Senior Officers – we hope that individuals and community groups will find it useful. Above all the guide is designed to encourage civic participation. And as we are a multicultural commission we want to encourage engagement with and by multicultural community members.

We hope you will use this resource to:

▶ promote a culture of community engagement in decision making that is inclusive,

▶ involve multicultural communities and support civic understanding in these communities,

▶ consider community opinion and knowledge (the lived experiences of residents) when planning for local communities, and

▶ facilitate constructive dialogue between decision makers and the communities they serve.

The 'kit' is in three sections. Dip into the section that best suits your needs:

SECTION 1	New to engagement?
The story behind the kit.	
SECTION 2	Confident in engagement?
A series of checklist 'tools' to help you to engage multicultural communities.	
SECTION 3	Looking for engagement ideas?
Offers additional information, helpful links and additional resources.	

The wellbeing of society depends not only on the wellbeing of individual citizens, but also on the quality of our collective public life: on factors such as the fairness of our political system, the health of our democracy and the participation of citizens in public life.

Australian Bureau of Statistics, Democracy, governance and citizenship, 2010.

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3 Victorian Auditor-General's Office, 2017.

Contents

Table of Figures

Introduction

1. Introduction

1.1 Culture and civic society

This kit emerged following a Victorian Multicultural Commission (the Commission) research study on social cohesion in Bendigo.[4] The study found that a planning matter had opened the space for broader conversations.

While not a distinctive planning application, its timing caused the matter to be connected to broader conversations about personal safety, national security, multiculturalism and the Australian identity, which remain at the forefront of our national discourse. However, systematic responses demonstrated that our democratic governance is robust and the value and integrity of Australia's legal, social and cultural institutions was reinforced.

The Commission research also found that being clear and open about decision making processes and objectives, as well as communicating how it will feed into decisions or government actions works to ease community concerns. Community engagement therefore is about selecting the right level based on the needs and or constraints of the decision maker and the potential impacts on stakeholders.[5]

We hope that decision makers will use this kit to create meaningful opportunities to engage diverse communities and groups and that communities will use it to inform and support their involvement.

1.2 Multicultural civic participation

Multicultural policy frames the Australian notion of citizenship and supports the proposition that the state belongs equally to all its citizens.

At the Commission, multicultural affairs, social inclusion and strengthening social cohesion are our core business. Since 1983 we have been the voice of Victoria's culturally, linguistically and religiously diverse communities and the main link between them and government, ensuring that their needs are considered in government program and policy development.

Our statutory objectives and functions include promoting:

▶ the full participation by Victoria's diverse communities in the social, cultural, economic and political life of Victoria,

▶ a better understanding of Victoria's diverse communities, and

▶ the social, cultural and economic benefits of diversity[6]

Civic engagement is fundamental to our key function of strengthening our community and we do this by conducting regular state-wide consultations, including via our extensive network of regional advisory councils.[7]

Our aim in producing this kit was to encourage civic participation and especially to provide our diverse communities with opportunities to participate in government decision making.

All individuals and institutions should recognise Victoria's diversity as an asset and a valuable resource benefiting Australia.

Multicultural Victoria Act 2011 s.4(3)(g).

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4   Rudner, 2017.

5   International Association for Public Participation (IAP2).

6   *Multicultural Victoria Act 2011*

7   The VMC has nine regional advisory councils. Five are based in rural and regional Victoria and five are based in Melbourne and surrounds. For further information see the VMC website: https://www.multicultural.vic.gov.au/regional-advisory-councils/about-rac

In addition to crossing the artificial boundaries on maps... we need to cross the real boundaries between cultures.

Newman & Kenworthy 1999

1.3 Who is a Victorian?

Understanding Victoria as everywhere and in every way multicultural is important to bear in mind when planning to engage and consult citizens and meet community needs. Victoria is home to one of the most culturally diverse societies in the world. Multicultural is not the 'other', it is who we are, and our diversity is growing. Victoria recorded the highest growth rate of all Australian states and territories at 2.4% in 2017 when the state's population reached 6.36 million.[8]

Of Victoria's total population:

▶ more than a quarter (28.4%) were born overseas in over 200 countries,

▶ more than a quarter (26%) spoke languages other than English at home, and

▶ over half (59%) followed more than 130 different faiths.

The proportion of the overseas-born from non-main English-speaking countries in Victoria (77.7%) is the highest among Australian states and territories. Victoria continues to attract migrants from all over the world, who contribute to our society.

We hope you will use the resources within this kit to foster the greater representation of multicultural communities through civic participation.

1.4 Using the kit

VMC research has found that people from diverse backgrounds want opportunities to be heard early in the decision making process.[9] This resource is designed to assist participation and help develop shared understandings. This may not be about achieving consensus, but rather ensuring that people are provided an opportunity to receive information and contribute.

The ideals of consensus can fail to account for the different levels of cultural and political capital that participants bring to discussions, and the power structures within which discussions take place.[10] In any event, expecting consensus from a very diverse group of social actors may be unrealistic.

While formal decision making is a rational exercise, it can sometimes be met with responses that do not fit within the rationale. This is neither helpful nor fully representative. The process needs to be flexible enough to include as legitimate the alternative values and valuations that other stakeholders might hold.

Use this resource when:

▶ there is an opportunity to open a two-way communication that involves listening to the community, and linking them into decision making processes, and

▶ there are benefits to facilitating people to engage with decision makers in a productive manner.

How the civic participation process is applied will be driven by the purpose, level and the type of decision under review. For example, some decisions have flexibility built in while others are constrained by stricter parameters.

In a rapidly changing world...it is important Australia boosts its efforts to become even more open, transparent and accountable, and improve public engagement.

Australia's First Open Government National Plan 2016-18

Conflict can arise when people's expectations are not met. The process, in their perceptions, may appear more elastic than the reality.

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8   Australian Bureau of Statistics, Estimated Resident Population, 2017.

9   VMC Service Provider Report, *Strengthening Social Cohesion, Meeting Community Needs,* 2016.

10   Rogers, McAuliffe, Piracha, and Schatz, 2017

Situations become emotionally charged when there are inbuilt constraints that are not properly understood by all participants. The civic participation process can be used to also convey the parameters of the debate. This is the space for the civic participation kit - Section 2 – which is designed to help parties to *navigate* the process.

Promoting civic understanding

Civic participation is about involving the people affected by a decision in the decision making process.[11] It promotes civic understanding by helping people to explore the issues through conversations that exchange viewpoints. As a planned process it should also remain fluid and flexible, and take into account the different styles of interaction, and different types of projects and situations.

The unique value of civic participation is in the two-way dialogue that ensues when the process is managed well. It can also help community members to understand the constraints within which decision makers operate. Conversely, it can help decision makers to understand the deeper views and motivations that community members might hold. The goal should be to develop a shared understanding that helps everyone to move forward. Setting the parameters of the dialogue - what is in-scope or out-of-scope - is equally important, as is maintaining respectful relations. Section 2 has checklist 'tools' to assess these aspects.

What we already know

▶ The quality of relationships between stakeholders helps to determine outcomes.

▶ People are passionate about their connection to place and home:

- with a deep desire to define, articulate and realise their visions for the future of their neighbourhoods and cities, and

- unchecked, this can lead to major disagreement.

▶ Open and transparent decision making fosters confidence in public institutions:

- it is equally important that decision making is also seen to be open and transparent.

What this kit adds

▶ Tips to help you capitalise on the opportunities that exist to improve civic engagement experiences for all participants.

▶ Useful 'tools' to help your inclusive engagement. This means:

- understanding the possible mismatch between what people want to talk about, different levels of civic knowledge and what legal frameworks allow,

- considering the social impacts that can arise during the process,

- dealing with matters outside the scope of the formal process as they arise, and

- facilitating responses to matters that are social impacts.

There is a close relationship between the level of community activity, the effectiveness of government and the strength of the economy.

Putnam 1993

Keeping it real and on track

In Australia our governance systems are robust and can withstand scrutiny and challenge.[12] Despite levels of contention that arise when diverse groups come together over an issue, the value and integrity of Australia's legal, social and cultural institutions remains sound.[13]

We can be bold and foster inclusive dialogue. The Commission has found that engaging people early in the process is key, as is employing informal practices alongside formal processes. This helps maintain the flow of accurate information and dampen unrealistic expectations on consensus.

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11 International Association for Public Participation (IAP2), 2015.

12 Rudner, 2017.

13 Ibid.

The future

For the first time in history, most people in the world now live in cities, with an increasing proportion of migrants.[14] Melbourne's population is projected to grow to 8 million by 2051, which will require the construction of up to 1.6 million new homes and the creation of 1.5 million jobs.[15]

Population growth and economic changes affect development and bring change. In Australia our major cities are much bigger when compared to the next largest city within a region or state, and reflect a general global movement towards urbanisation.[16]

Globalisation however, has reconfigured many of the forces driving development in regional Australia, including new technologies, new production methods, new lifestyle preferences, and new business and investor location decisions.[17] Global competitiveness demands the stronger integration of all regions.

In addition, regional patterns of Australia's economy and population show that regional areas tend to have much lower (within region) inequality. While inequality has increased everywhere, it has increased less in the regions than in the major cities. Overall, unemployment has not grown markedly better or worse in regions as opposed to cities over the past five years.[18]

Plan to be inclusive

We have argued for the merits of assessing the social impact on communities when urban environments are in the process of change.[19] In practice this means that, while a legislative requirement may not be necessary, some consideration of social impacts is helpful to assist both the decision making process and to support communities through periods of change.

The Planning Institute of Australia promotes the role of local communities and town planners in:

▶ identifying ways and means of resourcing and empowering local communities, and

▶ a planning system that frames positive actions to achieve rational regional strategies.[20]

SIAs can still be useful as a process for identifying, assessing and mitigating social conflict that is related to planning decision making.

Rudner 2016

1.5 Assessing social impacts

Assessing and managing risk is an inherent part of social impact assessment (SIA) philosophy and practice. Yet, while there are designated circumstances in which formal SIA is required, the practices involved in assessing and managing risk are worthwhile in thinking through the potential social impacts of a development or decision. SIA practice can help you to identify, assess and devise strategies to mitigate potential social conflict.

Section 2 is intended to fill this gap – the gap between the need for a formal SIA and informally utilising the process as a tool in the decision making process. This section has information and checklist 'tools' to help in assessing stakeholders and thinking through civic engagement strategies. These tools will assist your consideration of the scale, purpose and level of public interest that a development, project and or decision might create. They can help clarify thinking in identifying potential risk.

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14 Lee, Guadagno, & Murillo, 2017.

15 Victorian Government Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning, 2017.

16 Australian Government Department of Infrastructure and Regional Development, 2014.

17 Planning Institute of Australia, 2010.

18 Daley, Wood, & Chivers, 2017.

19 Rudner, 2017.

20 Planning Institute of Australia, 2010.

Engaging communities through an informal SIA process helps to:

▶ foster greater understanding between stakeholders,

▶ promote open and transparent decision making, and

▶ keep the decision making process moving.

1.6 Civic leadership

The role of proactive civic leadership in modelling appropriate civic behaviour cannot be underestimated. Strong civic leadership provides a support mechanism that sends consistent messaging to everyone in the community that the lines of communication are open, that they are being heard and demonstrates inclusive practice.

We have identified four key principles which promote transparent decision making and operate to reassure all stakeholders that the process is fair and equitable.[21]

Key principles:

1	Early identification
	Identify the issues, and assess the impact;
2	Swift coordinated action
	Gather stakeholders - government, business, community;
3	Strong civic leadership
	Reassure everyone that the situation is under control; and
4	Strong communication
	Straightforward and consistent messaging, translated as necessary to be inclusive.

A strong civic leader helps to:

1	Reinforce
	An inclusive vision that promotes multicultural Victoria,
2	Reassure
	Minority groups that they are recognised and included, and
3	Counterbalance
	Discriminatory views.

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21 Rudner, 2017. These principles are more fully outlined in Section 2.

1.7 Public participation

Figure 1: Public participation goal

Public participation goal		Inform	Consult	Involve	Collaborate	Empower
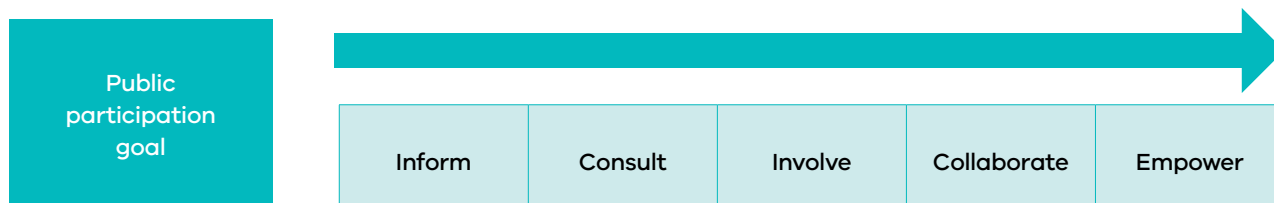
The Victorian Auditor-General's Office (VAGO) has recommended the International Association for Public Participation 2 (IAP2) model of public participation for use by all councils.[22] Civic engagement ranges from simply informing people to empowerment, delegating decision making to the public.

IAP2 identifies five levels of public engagement.

The VMC Civic Participation Kit is aimed at the middle level – *consult, involve and collaborate.* This includes a two-way flow of information - organisations sharing information within and across stakeholder groups during the decision making process.

Figure 2: IAP2 Levels of engagement

INFORM AND CONSULT

► Tends to occur once a decision has been made.

► Decision maker wants to either communicate or seek opinions on the decision.

INVOLVE AND COLLABORATE

► Involves a two-way flow of information.

► Information is shared within and across stakeholder groups during the decision making process.

EMPOWER

► Decision makers and stakeholders together come to a decision.

Gathering data

The VAGO highlighted the value and usefulness of qualitative information gathered through interviews, focus groups or open-ended survey questions. Qualitative information adds to the richness of the data and is useful also to evaluate the quality of the public participation.

In reflecting on the method of public participation, qualitative information can help you to evaluate:

► whether the consultation activities used the most suitable and effective techniques,

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22 This recommendation followed an audit on public participation and community engagement within the Local Government sector. Victorian Auditor-General's Office, May 2017.

- whether the consultation activities were conducted effectively,
- whether the engagement was cost-effective and timely,
- what impact the engagement had on decision making, and
- whether people from all participant groups felt that they were listened to.

Citizens in the multicultural state

This kit supports the aims of our national and state multicultural policy frameworks.[23] The information and tools provided are designed to help you to recognise and accommodate the cultural diversity of all citizens in formal and informal decision making processes.

A human-rights based approach to civic engagement can improve participation in decision making, particularly for those groups that traditionally find it difficult to contribute to government decision making, such as children and young people, older people, and people from diverse cultural and linguistic backgrounds.[24]

Civic Participation Kit Structure

The remainder of this document is structured as follows:

2	Confident in engagement?
A series of checklist 'tools' to help you plan, run and evaluate your community engagement.	

3	Looking for engagement ideas?
Additional resources and information - sometimes you need to go to the community and meet them where they are.	

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23   Section 3 has more detail of national and state multicultural policy.

24   The human rights framework is outlined fully at Section 3.

Civic Participation

2. Civic Participation

The real-life experiences of residents can add value to formal decision making. Open and deliberative processes also improve public perceptions about the integrity of a decision. Planning for public participation should reflect the scale, purpose and level of public interest in the council decision or project.[25]

Citizens participate in decisions that affect their lives by:

▶ voting,

▶ engaging in political actions, such as attending Council meetings and community consultations,

▶ writing letters to people in authority,

▶ participating in protests, and

▶ accessing public services, such as transport, education and health.

The ideals of democracy uphold the rights of Australians to be treated equally and fairly, and in return they are expected to comply with laws and regulations. Human rights legislation protects all Australians, including freedom to practice religion, freedom of association, and access to health and education.[26] These rights are accompanied by responsibilities, such as refraining from harming others, which are also regulated through anti-discrimination and anti-vilification laws.

Community engagement is a planned process with the specific purpose of working across organisations, stakeholders and communities to shape the decisions or actions of the members of the community, stakeholders or organisation in relation to a problem, opportunity or outcome.

International Association
for Public Participation 2015

2.1 Legislation and community engagement

The Victorian Government is finalising a comprehensive review of the *Local Government Act*.[27] The Bill, introduced to parliament on 23 May 2018, repeals and re-enacts the *Local Government Act 1989*. It provides a contemporary legislative framework for local government in Victoria that enhances democracy, council transparency and responsiveness to community and the State.

The revised Act requires that Council decision making must be accountable to the local community. In its decision making processes a Council is required to be accountable to the community it serves by adopting and maintaining a community engagement policy.[28]

Councils' community engagement policy is to be drafted in accordance with the overarching governance principles outlined in the revised Act. This includes taking into account

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25 Victorian Auditor-General's Office, 2017.

26 For more detail of human rights legislation refer to Section 3.

27 An Exposure Draft of the Local Government Bill was released for consultation on 12 December 2017. Submissions closed on Friday, 16 March 2018. Further information available at: https://www.localgovernment.vic.gov.au/our-programs/local-government-act-review.

28 *Local Government Bill 2018,* Part 3 Council decision making.

the supporting principles of community engagement and public transparency.

The VMC Civic Participation Kit supports the principles for community engagement set down in the revised Act. While all of these principles are important, principles b), c) and d) are especially pertinent to multicultural communities, who may require translated materials and interpreters to be able to participate fully.

Principles for community engagement:

a) a community engagement process must have a clearly defined objective and scope,

b) participants in community engagement must have access to objective, relevant and timely information to inform their participation,

c) participants in community engagement must be representative of the persons and groups affected by the subject of the community engagement,

d) participants in community engagement are entitled to support to enable meaningful and informed engagement, and

e) participants in community engagement are informed of the ways in which the community engagement process will influence Council decision making.[29]

2.2 Barriers to participation

We use the broad term 'community' to define groups of people – the Australian community, the Victorian community, the local community. Within a community of interest, certain groups experience barriers to participation. Not incorporating their needs can result in inadequate public engagement practice which distances sections of the community, undermines trust and contributes to poorly informed decisions.[30]

In aiming to be inclusive it may be necessary to tailor engagement activities to enable some

community members to fully participate. This means being aware of the barriers that some groups face. For example, family/carer responsibilities and or having a disability can limit opportunities to participate, age (young people studying, seniors), socio-economic status, and levels of education can all affect a person's ability to participate in your consultation.

Peak bodies and local community health organisations can assist you in reaching people who face barriers to participation, as well as providing advice on how to include them, such as going to them rather than expecting them to come to you.

Migrants can face multiple barriers – socioeconomic, cultural and political - in accessing opportunities for civic engagement. The most recurrent barriers are language, reduced access to social networks, lack of representation, discrimination and xenophobia.[31] Newly arrived migrants may still be negotiating settlement but this does not mean they are not interested in the decisions shaping their new neighbourhoods.

The more involved and engaged the community is in planning, program or policy issues, the more aware the community becomes of the constraints, options, and drivers for change, and hopefully the more satisfied they are with the engagement process and the outcomes achieved.

ACT Government 2011

For all migrant groups, active citizenship is the goal - including structured forms of engagement with political processes, as well as more day-to-day forms of participation in society.[32] Developing a sense of agency is particularly important for humanitarian

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29 *Local Government Bill 2018,* s.55 The community engagement principles.

30 Victorian Auditor-General's Office, 2017.

31 Lee, Guadagno, & Murillo, 2017.

32 Australian Human Rights Commission, 2016.

entrants who have had their capacity for agency diminished by the refugee and pre-settlement experiences.

The private sector recognises the importance of improving diversity in civic and business life.[33] The case for cultural diversity is about living up to Australia's egalitarianism, and about securing our future prosperity.[34]

More broadly, a lack of political representation can result in a lack of recognition and consideration of the needs and capacities of migrant communities.[35] Council planning processes can be used to effectively promote the participation of migrants and other groups in public affairs.

As community leaders Councillors and Officers can effectively lower many of the barriers facing newcomers, promote community harmony, and facilitate access to economic initiatives and income opportunities, health care and education.[36] Many Victorian Councils already do this effectively.

2.3 Key principles for effective public engagement

Engaging people in the decisions that affect them has many benefits, not least because it assists in keeping the decision making process moving. The Commission identified five key principles for connecting people to decision making processes, which underpin the various strategies and actions that follow.[37]

33 See the CGU Small Business Insurance Migrant Small Business Report 2017, available at: https://www.cgu.com.au/migrantsmallbusiness/ PWC Australia has a diversity target that states 'at least of 30% of our partner admits will be from a diverse cultural background by 2020'. Retrieved 21 May 2018: https://www.pwc.com.au/about-us/diversity-and-inclusion.html

34 Australian Human Rights Commission, 2016.

35 Lee, Guadagno, & Murillo, 2017.

36 Ibid.

37 Rudner, 2017.

KEY PRINCIPLE	DETAILS
1) Early Identification	▶ Scope potential issues through a social impact assessment (SIA) exercise and plan to mitigate as far as practicable. ▶ Early identification supports strategic action, rather than reaction. For example: • Open a centralised communication channel such as a designated email address so that all emails for the matter under consideration go to that inbox and not to individual officers. • Advertise this resource widely to the broader community, and advise staff that they can forward emails for monitoring.
2) Strong Civic Leadership	▶ Strong civic leadership that supports multiculturalism is essential to ensure open lines of communication. ▶ Displaying civic leadership includes open communication, including activities such as: • speaking with the media • training staff • facilitating dialogue with community leaders • hosting small group discussions ▶ The benefits of strong civic leadership include: • articulating an inclusive vision for the community • reassuring minorities and sub-groups through inclusive language that demonstrates discrimination and bias is not tolerated.
3) Coordinated Action	▶ Coordinating action across sectors aids consistent action, helping to ensure accurate messaging that is not distorted. ▶ Know your audience and be consistent - a mix of formal and informal communications with the same message to match the diversity, including translated materials, plain English and story boards.
4) Clear Communication	▶ Clear and timely communication is required within and across organisations and groups and individuals. ▶ Communications should help to keep everyone on the same page - relay the values, goals and desired outcomes within the organisation and to external stakeholders. ▶ Create a one-page information sheet and disseminate widely – state the organisation's position and how this was derived, including the parameters of the decision making (legislative, resourcing, etc.). ▶ Ensure that staff know what is expected of them - be explicit about expected conduct , including respectful engagement and setting parameters through organisational values.
5) Access Expert Opinion	▶ Accessing expert opinion and advice can bring: • new perspectives on the issues • identification of potential issues • strategies for addressing different situations ▶ Identify potential experts within the broader community, within all stakeholder groups and external experts. ▶ Enlist the help of specialists in other government agencies, consultants and academics as appropriate to the circumstance.

2.4 Develop an inclusive mechanism

Civic engagement is also about driving a public conversation and taking people on a journey. Research demonstrates that, with this approach, people are willing to take on board other opinions and new information that enables them to reframe their own position.[38] People need time and opportunity to transition, to consider new information, to reflect and come back with an altered position. Investing in time to allow for this process at the front end can help to keep the conversation flowing and the process moving along. The goal is for all parties to participate in well-organised, informed, respectful discussions about change.

Legislative frameworks are not designed to engage with emotive issues. However, people do not leave their emotions at the door. This can cause them to feel that the decision making process, however well designed, is not taking account of community aspirations, hopes and concerns. There is considerable scope, therefore, for community education to take place alongside the decision making processes. Rather than wait until a point of no-return where a potential conflict will occur, use the lead-in time to get information out.

Inclusive practice

Human rights legislation protects all Australians, by means of federal and state laws, policies and practice, as well as through the common law (court decisions) and culture. These safeguards, and our capacity to exercise them, are important aspects of our civil and multicultural society.[39]

In Victoria it is unlawful to discriminate against someone because of a personal characteristic, such as age, gender, race, carer and parental status, marital status, disability, physical features and political beliefs. Discrimination is also unlawful when it occurs in an area of public life, such as clubs, schools and shops, or in the workplace.[40]

Transparent and accountable

Informed decision making contributes to a more just and open minded society.[41] Conflicts can arise between what some people want to talk about and what legal frameworks allow. Conflicting agendas can and do represent more than planned physical change in the urban fabric. They may represent ideals, aspirations and memories, and the ways in which people experience the local neighbourhood.

Research surveys indicate there is a poor average level of knowledge that citizens have about the operation of the political system.

Tim Soutphommasane AHRC 2017

Public engagement strategies need to support the integrity of the organisation and its decision making. They need to contribute to building trust and confidence, otherwise people can claim that 'bureaucracy' is not listening, or that the process is not transparent. When this happens decision makers can feel increasingly frustrated with the levels of emotion being generated.

Barriers to public engagement effectively exclude some community members and risk leaving citizens feeling dissatisfied. Whatever the outcome of a formal decision or plan, all residents live with the outcome and therefore all should have the opportunity to participate.

Discussions with migrant and multicultural groups can be conducted through social agencies serving those communities, such as ethnic community councils. Enlist the help of your local multicultural organisation to

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38 Rogers, Piracha, & Schatz, 2014.

39 Civil society is a term used to broadly refer to people and organisations outside of government, including non-government organisations, business, academia, community groups and the public.

40 Victorian Equal Opportunity and Human Rights Commission (VEOHRC), 2016. Retrieved 8 September 2017: http://www.humanrightscommission.vic.gov.au/index.php/discrimination

41 Valverde, 2012.

assist with strategies to reach culturally and linguistically diverse community members. Seek advice on interpreter, translation, childcare and other requirements to facilitate participation.[42]

Figure 3 below illustrates stakeholders differing hopes, goals and expectations. Each enters the process with different agendas and levels of agency.

Starting positions:

1. Someone makes a proposal or application to Council.

2. The organisation assesses the proposal in accordance with legislative frameworks.

3. Citizens are given an opportunity to be informed and or to provide input.

Figure 3: Differing agendas and levels of agency

APPLICANT

'I have a proposal'

▶ I hired a professional to help me with the proposal.

▶ It complies with regulations.

▶ I am willing to negotiate on reasonable changes.

▶ This should not take long.

DECISION MAKER

'I hope we can work it out'

▶ I have a proposal to assess.

▶ My job is to make sure it complies with regulations.

▶ I approved the application.

▶ I am willing to negotiate on reasonable changes.

▶ This is a standard application and should not take long to process.

CIVIC PARTICIPANT

'I just found out about this proposal'

▶ I don't like how it affects me or my neighbourhood.

▶ I don't want it or I want it to change.

▶ I need to find out what I can do.

▶ I am willing/not willing to negotiate.

▶ Will my concerns be heard?

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42 Victorian Government policy on language services (interpreting and translation) aim to ensure that all Victorians have equal access to government services regardless of their English language skills. For further information refer to the Commission's website: https://www.multicultural.vic.gov.au/projects-and-initiatives/improving-language-services/standards-and-guidelines

2.5 Who to involve

The Victorian Government is committed to ensuring that all members of the community are able to have their say on issues which affect them. The transparency of the decision making is important, especially when the decision maker is a public authority. The authority needs to be fair, and to be seen to be fair:

> "One of those that's been important for us is actually getting into discussions early. We're keen to try to get into those conversations well before that happens - by the time the submission stage is reached everything's been locked up. There are things you can do in terms of getting in early."[43]

An obligation to be inclusive

Involving diverse community members provides a varied range of viewpoints and interests that together help to inform and improve formal decision making. Employing a human-rights based approach can further improve participation, particularly for those groups that traditionally find it difficult to contribute to council decisions, such as young people, older people, and culturally and linguistically diverse people and people with a disability.[44]

We should not make presumptive judgements about the ways people may behave; they should be afforded the opportunity to be heard.

Rogers, McAuliffe et al. 2017

Including these groups is not just a 'nice thing to do', it is required under International and State law, and is supported by research evidence and Victorian Government policy commitments. Participation permits people to 'own' the decisions that are made that affect their lives. Being included and involved in the process increases self-confidence and skills. It is empowering.

Community change offers opportunities to develop new leaders...to identify people with potential and encourage them to lead.

Checkoway 1981

Unless the relevance of the matter for discussion is clearly conveyed, through the provision of accessible information, then 'buy in' from the diversity represented within the community may be lost.

Being wholly inclusive and facilitating the participation of all groups involves well considered and informed planning. Figure 4 below illustrates the method and benefits.

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43 Valverde, 2012.

44 Community engagement and human rights, VHREOC. Retrieved 11 September 2017: http://humanrightscommission.vic.gov.au/the-charter-and-local-government/charter-obligations/community

Figure 4: Planning inclusive engagement

BEING INCLUSIVE	WHY IT HELPS	HOW TO PROCEED
▶ Refer to demographic and socio-cultural information	▶ Meets statutory human rights obligations	▶ Think carefully about the best method - may be different for different groups
▶ Develop a communication strategy to provide information and support participation - translated materials, visual display	▶ Keeps the conversation and the process moving along	▶ Timing of consultation and venue - can at-home mothers and shift-workers attend?
▶ Value contributions	▶ Saves time and money in the long run	▶ Factor in services to assist participation - language (interpreting, translation), childcare and other services as required.
▶ Engage purposefully	▶ Fosters social cohesion through inclusive civic participation	▶ Seek collective solutions that build on common ground
▶ Provide feedback	▶ Develops trust in the institution, establishes community connections	

Consider that:

▶ everyone's time is valuable

▶ being inclusive means thinking outside the square to facilitate people - its not just about the process

▶ people should be at the centre of the process

▶ use each step in the process to build community understanding

▶ try to see obstacles/objections as a step along the way, a normal part of the change process

▶ inclusive - 'joined up' - decision making supports community strengthening and builds social cohesion

▶ it may pave the way to future civic participation exercises that are more straightforward

Engagement style

Be aware that styles of engagement also affect the manner in which strategies and skills will be received and supported by the community. The selection of a style that fits the community is sometimes more important than the issues themselves. People who are conflictual or consensual may avoid taking action on an important issue if the tactics are inappropriate to their style.[45] This is illustrated in Figure 5 (page 26).

This is also about being aware of the needs of different audiences. For example, the cultural appropriateness of your message and how it might be received, communication styles and/or preferences, as well as barriers to participation.

TIP

Refer to Section 3.3, Different Ways to Engage Communities, for practical tips and consultation approaches.

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45 Checkoway, 1997.

Figure 5: Styles of engagement

CONFLICT	Conflict style assumes that power is scarce and confrontation may be necessary for its redistribution.
CAMPAIGN	Campaign style assumes that it is possible to persuade people to see things in a particular way.
CONSENSUS	Consensus style assumes that power is abundant and that people are in relative agreement on how to share it.

2.6 Designing your approach

Determine the most suitable types of participation to match the purpose of your consultation. To do this you must know what you are asking of stakeholder participants when you decide to use a particular method. You may find that you need to vary the style/type of engagement for some community stakeholders.

Those facing barriers to participation such as younger and older people, people with a disability, people with caring responsibilities, people from culturally and linguistically diverse communities and socio-economically disadvantaged groups will need you to make more of an effort. This often means going to them to seek their views and can be well worth the effort. The method you choose should:

▶ meet your decision/project objectives, purpose of consultation and anticipated outcomes

▶ be inclusive of all stakeholders

▶ be adaptable to suit the context of your work and community needs

▶ incorporate an evaluation to capture the success and effectiveness of your consultation

2.7 Checklist 'tools'

Open and transparent governance is based on the principle of upholding values of openness in civic engagement, to improve service delivery, the managing of public resources, and promoting innovation.

> **TIP**
>
> 1. Each section includes a completed checklist example to guide you.
>
> 2. A series of blank Checklist Templates is available at Section 2.8 for you to copy and adapt for your own interactions.

The Principles of Open Government include:

▶ promoting transparency

▶ empowering citizens

▶ using new technologies to make government more effective and accountable[46]

When considering the best consultation method it is worthwhile taking time to think about the scale, purpose and level of public interest in the project. For example, if you are adjusting the local recreation centre program, a small scale poll of

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46 The Australian Government confirmed its membership of the Open Government Partnership in November 2015. Australia's First Open Government National Action Plan 2016-18. Available at: https://ogpau.pmc.gov.au/sites/default/files/files/2016/10/Australias-first-Open-Government-National-Action-Plan-Draft-for-consultation-Accessible.pdf

patrons may be all that is needed. However, if the centre is being renovated the whole community may be interested. In those circumstances a larger scale consultation is desirable.

Following are a series of checklist 'tools' to guide your civic engagement planning. The checklists are designed to prompt your thinking and alert you to the issues that can potentially arise. Use them to help plan your civic engagement and to alert you to potential mitigating strategies.

It may not be necessary to populate every box on every checklist. However, these tables will assist you in thinking about the ramifications a certain project or decision may have on particular community groups.

The Victorian community is not homogeneous but made up of people of different ages, cultural, ethnic and socio-economic backgrounds, as well as political persuasions. All will have differing perspectives on what their community is and what it needs.

Use the following series of checklist tools to guide your consultation and participation.

1. Stakeholder Checklist

2. Communications Checklist

3. Risk Assessment Checklist

4. Capability Assessment Checklist

5. Response Checklist

Checklist Tools

01. Stakeholder Checklist – who to involve in a dialogue

As a risk assessment strategy, considering the real life experiences of community stakeholders adds value to planning your consultation. This checklist will help you to be inclusive of all potential stakeholders and to assess their likely standpoint. Use this checklist as a community profiling tool.

The stakeholder checklist is designed to help you to consider differences, commonalities, interests and positions for each stakeholder group. This will help you to assess the best consultation method. It will also help you to identify individuals/groups that need closer consideration.

How to use this checklist

Use the checklist to help you identify potential areas for conflict. List all key stakeholder groups, and sub-groups. Check with other areas of the organisation for additional stakeholders that you may not be aware of and who may be likely to attend your consultation (i.e. Community Planning, Local Laws, Public Health).

This checklist will also help you to finalise the engagement method. For example, if you find that there are potential stakeholders with opposing views, it would be more productive to hold separate small group meetings with each rather than one large town hall meeting. That way each group can be heard without disruption, and their views recorded.

> **TIP**
>
> Organisational websites and social media can provide tremendous insight when trying to understand people's different perceptions and worldviews.

In your preliminary analysis include what you know of the stakeholder. In column 1 consider:

▶ demographic and socio-cultural information, including cultural and ethnicity data[47]

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47 Most councils have demographic resources available in the public domain on the Council website, which localise ABS census data. *id.the population experts* provide in-depth information for over 300 local government areas and suburbs in Australia and New Zealand at: https://home.id.com.au/demographic-resources/

- role in the community

- rationale - for being interested, involved

Identify stakeholder's:

- main concern/s - where known, otherwise an educated guess

- objectives – consider the outcomes they are most likely to want to achieve; this will help you to prepare your 'pitch' – different stakeholders may respond in different ways

TIP

Prepare a brief analysis on each stakeholder – using the matrix to inform you of the environment in which your decision is being made. Use this to finalise your engagement method.

Add to Columns 3-6:

- Social networks – are these narrow/local or far reaching (is there potential ability to mobilise others, to bring in additional intrastate/interstate support?)

- Identify this stakeholder's information source, if known (is it narrow in scope, i.e. mainly social media, supporting their own worldview, or are the sources broad and temperate?)

- Note access to financial resources where known (could their access to financial resources enable them to disproportionately impact the consultation?)

- political resources if known (right, conservative, left, extremist, etc.) is this a claim or dispute supported by substantial proxy resources from outside the local area?

Stakeholder Matrix

Stakeholder	Social Networks	Information Sources	Financial Resources	Political Resources
Sociocultural info				
Community role				
Rationale				
Aspirations				
Concerns				
Objective				

Note: All blank templates are available at Section 2.8

02. Communications Checklist - create your messaging

The communications checklist will help you to identify the key messages - initial and follow-up messages. Identify who you are targeting with the message and how to best convey it to this group. For example, do you need to enlist ethnic media (radio, newspaper)? Is a social media post appropriate?

Think about what you want your messaging to achieve. Consider:

▶ why you are engaging with the community on this decision

▶ any constraints, such as legal frameworks, and clearly communicate the parameters

▶ whether your organisation has consulted on this issue in the past, and if so, the result

▶ lead in time – the time available until the decision must be finalised

▶ clear framing of the issue that you want the community to know and respond to

TIP

The Victorian community is multicultural – culturally, linguistically and religiously diverse. Check your organisation's Multicultural, and Access and Inclusion policies for advice on engaging these community members.

Think about your message as a conversation starter for an ongoing dialogue, and be prepared to answer questions from interested community members. Clearly define the options and the objectives for civic engagement.

How to use this checklist

Use the matrix to help you identify potential areas for misunderstanding by thinking about the following:

▶ **Framing** - think about the purpose and language of your messaging. Is it clear or can it be easily manipulated through framing (purpose, language, structure) to create particular responses? Are you asking people to critically reflect on this information?

▶ **Priming** – consider how your message might be received. People can be 'primed' to interpret messages based on the selectivity of materials presented and their focus. For example, if you are focussed on the process and not the community this will come through in your messaging. Also, different groups may identify with certain aspects of the message and use this to build their objections.

▶ **Anchoring** – people receive information and look for reference points, so that they can relate this new information to past events on which they had formed a view. Thus, anchoring can affect a person's view on the matter at hand; people categorise and filter messaging by 'anchoring' it to previous information received.

▶ **Representativeness** – can determine how people will respond to your messaging. Most people make associations with their own life experience and similar messaging received in the past. Thus, the representativeness of messages and events with regard to people's experiences can stimulate particular responses, especially in terms of memory and imagination.

▶ **Availability of information** – a person's information source/s can be broad or narrow; some people are better informed than others. If information sources are very limited and affirming - kitchen table chats, friendship networks, social media platforms that confirm their worldview – their views may be rigid, although not intractable. Thus, while some people are not accustomed to having their views challenged, others have enlarged their knowledge through exposure to alternative views.

Communications Checklist Example

Pro-diversity local community groups	Actions	Message
Framing *how the issue is presented*	▶ Identify the key narrative ▶ Identify possible positive, negative and neutral interpretations	▶ Part of the community ▶ Evenhanded assessment of people with opposing viewpoints
Priming *focus of communication*	▶ Identify key ideas, people, places, events	▶ Focused on inclusive community events and on activities of other groups (oppositional) creating tensions
Anchoring *perceived confirmation of previous events*	▶ Linking to previous messages or messages from other sources *Identify:* ▶ possible positive, negative and neutral interpretations ▶ best existing supporting messages ▶ contradictory messages and whether these can or should be uprooted	▶ Campaigning from an inclusive intercultural standpoint ▶ Posting community messages - use of logo in in local businesses and public space
Representativeness *association with own experience and other's stories*	*Identify:* ▶ Elements of messages that others can relate to ▶ Possible positive, negative and neutral interpretations	▶ Limited knowledge and experience of operating within legislative frameworks ▶ Stories about Council and planning processes
Availability of information *ease of recall and imagination*	▶ Link to emotional, intense or memorable ideas, people, places, events *Identify:* ▶ Possible positive, negative and neutral interpretations ▶ Compelling stories to communicate ▶ Whether transformational messages can or should be used to redirect emotional responses	▶ Takes notice of public and private discourse in evaluating organisational staff and decision making

Communication Checklist

Stakeholder	Message
Framing *purpose and language*	
Priming *selectivity of information and focus*	
Anchoring *previous events affect views on new events*	
Representativeness *relatedness to previous knowledge and conceptions*	
Availability of information	

03. Risk Assessment Checklist – identify potential risks

Effective civic engagement has benefits and risks. Assessing and managing risk is an inherent part of social impact philosophy and practice. In this context risk is generally a combination of two components - the likelihood of potential consequences and the strength of their impact.[48]

Risk in the context of civic engagement

In the 21st century, life is inherently 'risky'. Natural disasters, terror threats, job insecurity, globalisation and economic restructuring. The term 'risk society' describes the individual and social conditions associated with generalised uncertainty and associated anxiety.[49]

This checklist will help in codifying the complexity of the risk into a typology and assist in distinguishing the types of hazards, dangers or effects of social processes that are associated with the decision and/or project. The typology suggested by this checklist can be useful as an analytical framework to help you structure, frame and discuss the social processes and impacts.

Risk is also about the relationship between the intent and capabilities of an individual, group, or organisation and what the environment enables them to do. For example, in community conflict people can support, re-interpret or challenge regulatory and social norms, through actions which highlight contested areas of policy and practice. In assessing risk therefore be mindful also of the likelihood of occurrence and the potential severity of any consequences if a threat were to be carried out.

Assessing risk

Risk assessment can help you to identify and evaluate potential risk, from and to each stakeholder group, with regard to their different belief system and agendas (worldviews, goals, objectives and rationales). Different groups will respond to potential risks through the lens of

their own worldview, in accordance also with their social networks, financial and material resources, and communication ability. This can mean, for example, that people with broad networks and resources have the capability to carry out actions and present a greater risk to the decision and or project as a result.

In Bendigo for instance, a relatively straightforward planning permit decision became the catalyst for contested ground - both geographical and ideological. The social impacts of this local civic decision became tied to broader national debates related to community safety, national security, multicultural policy and Australian identity.[50]

The nature of migrant societies poses challenges for conceptualising social impacts because ethnoreligious change is part of the history and character of Australia towns, cities and regions.

Rudner 2016

Concepts used to assess risk

These concepts are used in this and the remaining checklists. Be aware of the broader picture and potential for community groups to link your decision/project to some other agenda – environmental activism, community safety, labour market issues, immigration and similar debates.

▶ **Life and Being** – personal safety is the extreme risk element. Change may not seem a life or death proposition, however it can challenge people's ability to cope by creating uncertainty, insecurity and a desire to control the situation that is causing anxiety.

▶ **Experience** – people's identity is linked to the physical and social interaction they have with their environment – they devise tactics to help them negotiate their world. For them this becomes a personal means of

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48 Japp & Kushe, 2008.

49 Beck, 1992.

50 Rudner, 2017.

'risk management' in response to perceived, conceived or anticipated threats. We do however, also expect them to adhere to cultural and social behavioural 'norms'.

- **Knowledge** – people construct knowledge about potential risk in order to manage and control the risk. Relying on expert knowledge to make decisions, assessing the evidence about threats and their management, can be confusing. For example, scientific knowledge is transformed into economic and political ways of knowing through legal and political structures and the media. We receive conflicting messages and need to construct our own 'biography' through this risk assessment process.[51]

People who feel a sense of loss due to change and uncertainty, feel threatened and may seek to gain control over outsiders, rather than mastery over the changes that affect their lives.

Rudner 2016

- **Reputation** - social media means that the effects of decisions now have greater impact on the reputations of decision makers and organisations. You may need to be more aware of the socio-cultural and political contexts of your decision and the process. Public decision making instils self-regulating processes in addition to legal processes, in order to manage how others may respond to decisions.

- **Resources** - financial and other risks to resources are more material in nature when compared to the previous categories. Risks to resources may not be easily identified or calculated but can be considerable, especially where disputes arise due to the potential for unexpected legal costs that may result.

- **Spatial/Environmental** - cultural conceptions of risk are written into our physical landscapes. Urban space, for example, is a representation of political, economic, social and cultural processes - an uneven geography of power.

Social relationships are symbolised within allocations of land use and property ownership. The designated lines that divide space - public, private, open space - also regulate our behaviour (noise laws, criminal code and community safety).

TIP

Think about the broader picture - in the 21st century the global can affect the local ('glocal') very quickly through 24-hour news cycles and use of social media. Your local project can become tied to broader national and international debates. Awareness of risk and appropriate messaging are important.

How to use this checklist

This checklist helps you to codify the complexity of the potential risk or threat into a typology by distinguishing the types of hazards, dangers or effects of social processes associated with the project or proposal.

Identify potential risk by thinking about the following:

- The type of risk, hazard or threat:
  - What is at risk - personal safety, reputation, finances?
  - What resources are on hand to deal with perceived and actual risk/threat?
- Intensity of risk – is it mild, serious, chronic, acute?
- Duration of risk - short, medium, long-term?
- Predictability (risk) - probability and/or likelihood?
- Potential severity of consequences - minimal, medium, severe?

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51   Beck, 1992.

Risk Assessment Checklist Example

Local business people who support the project	Life and Being	Experience	Knowledge	Reputation	Resources	Spatial / Environmental
Identified Risk	Loss of patronage and possibility of closure	Need to change opening hours – especially hospitality	Facing dis-crimination	Affected by image of area and lost tourism	Trade affected by protests	Affected by need to restrict access to public space
Intensity	Mild	Serious	Chronic	Chronic	Serious	Mild
Duration	Short-term	Short-term	May last	Long-term	Short-term	Short-term
Predictability	Probable	Likely	Probable	Likely	Likely	Likely
Severity	Medium	Minimal	Severe	Medium	Medium	Minimal

Risk Assessment Checklist

Stakeholder	Life and Being	Experience	Knowledge	Reputation	Financial	Environment
Identified Risk						
Intensity						
Duration						
Predictability						
Severity						

04.Capability Assessment Checklist – additional to Checklist 3

This checklist is designed to help you to recognise groups who hold alternative views that could potentially disrupt the process. It is an extension of Checklist 3 and may not be necessary in all circumstances. It will be most useful when people hold firmly entrenched views and discussion is likely to become intense and heated.

TIP

These groups have greater potential to hijack your agenda and to escalate matters very quickly. Do not be afraid to discretely meet with leaders in the first instance to gauge any potential to disrupt and delay the decision making process.

How to use this checklist

This checklist helps you to further analyse potential risk by assessing the level of menace or the nuisance value of a received risk/threat. Consider the level of emotion in the dialogue exchange, and assess the capability of the person or group in following through with the threat.

Consider capability by thinking about:

▶ perceived risk/desire to carry out a threat - low, medium, high?

▶ capability of carrying out a threatened action - low, medium, high?

▶ method of carrying out a threatened action - opportunistic, planned?

▶ resources to carry through with a threatened action - low, medium, high?

Capability Assessment Checklist

Stakeholder	Life and Being	Experience	Knowledge	Reputation	Financial	Environment
Identified Risk						
Desire						
Method						
Capability						
Resources						

05. Response Checklist – mitigating strategies

This checklist will help you to develop a response plan and develop strategies to respond to the risk. Having identified risks and considered the viability of these being carried out, this checklist will help you to mitigate - plan to distribute the risks and think about how you might limit or mitigate them.

You can develop different strategies and tactics to intervene for each identified scenario. Your response plan might include source materials and details of experts/stakeholders that can be helpful to guide your response strategies.

Response planning can include:

▶ methods of identifying a risk - low, medium, high?

▶ identification of risk indicators - increasing intensity, frequency?

▶ required knowledge and skills to address a risk/threat - existing, external expert needed?

▶ methods of monitoring presenting risks - register, meetings?

▶ resources to address a risk - time, money, technology?

Response Checklist

Stakeholder	Life and Being	Experience	Knowledge	Reputation	Financial	Environment
Potential Risk						
Indicator of Risk						
Methods of Risk Identification						
Existing Knowledge & Skill						
Needed Knowledge & Skill						
Monitoring						
Resources Required						

2.8 Checklist templates

1. Stakeholder Checklist – who to involve in a dialogue

Stakeholder	Social Network	Information Sources	Financial Resources	Political Resources
Sociocultural info				
Community role				
Rationale				
Aspirations				
Concerns				
Objective				

2. Communications Checklist - create your messaging

Stakeholder	Message
Framing *purpose and language*	
Priming *selectivity of information and focus*	
Anchoring *previous events affect views on new events*	
Representativeness *relatedness to previous knowledge and conceptions*	
Availability of information	

3. Risk Assessment Checklist – identify potential risks

Stakeholder	Life and Being	Experience	Knowledge	Reputation	Financial	Environment
Identified Risk						
Intensity						
Duration						
Predictability						
Severity						

4. Capability Assessment Checklist – additional to Checklist 3

Stakeholder	Life and Being	Experience	Knowledge	Reputation	Financial	Environment
Identified Risk						
Desire						
Method						
Capability						
Resources						

5. Response Checklist – mitigating strategies

Stakeholder	Life and Being	Experience	Knowledge	Reputation	Financial	Environment
Potential Risk						
Indicator of Risk						
Methods of Risk Identification						
Existing Knowledge & Skill						
Needed Knowledge & Skill						
Monitoring						
Resources Required						

Additional Resources

3. Additional Resources

3.1 Reports and other resources to assist civic participation

Victorian Multicultural Commission Bendigo Report: Social Cohesion in Bendigo (2016)

Bendigo attracted international attention from 2014-2016 because the regional Victorian city became the site of multiple anti-mosque, anti-Islam and anti-racism protests that distilled national debates about safety, security, multiculturalism and Australian identity.

Centred on a planning application for a place of worship, the research identified potential strategies to effectively manage, negotiate and mediate community-based conflict related to urban change in multicultural societies. This 'toolkit' extends these strategies.

The study received a Planning Institute of Australia (Victoria) Award for Excellence for 2017 in Cutting Edge Research. The VMC Bendigo Report is available at:

https://www.multicultural.vic.gov.au/images/2017/VMCSocialCohesionInBendigo.pdf

International Association for Public Participation 2 (IAP2) Australasia.

IAP2 is an international member association which promotes the practice of public participation, incorporating individuals, governments, institutions and other entities that affect the public interest throughout the world. It is the leading public participation association in Australasia and the largest IAP2 affiliate in the world. IAP2 has developed the Core Values for Public Participation for use in the development and implementation of public participation processes.

See website for further details and resources: https://www.iap2.org.au/Home

Public Participation and Community Engagement: Local Government Sector.

Victorian Auditor-General's Office (VAGO) - 10 May 2017.

This audit examined the effectiveness of community engagement and participation at the local government level, looking at public participation at six councils (metro, rural and regional), and Local Government Victoria's role in supporting councils' public participation activities. It assessed public participation as part of the budget process, as an element in the development of council plans, and as an investment decision for each council.

PowerPoint Presentation Overview available at: https://www.audit.vic.gov.au/sites/default/files/20170510-PP-Local-Gov-presentation.pdf

Full VAGO Report available at: https://www.audit.vic.gov.au/sites/default/files/20170510-PP-Local-Gov.pdf

Sourcing demographic data

▶ **The Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) Census of Population and Housing** is conducted every five years. The last census took place in 2016 and the next is scheduled for 2021. The ABS website has a range of census products that can help you such as data by geography, data by products, etc. http://www.abs.gov.au/websitedbs/D3310114.nsf/Home/census

▶ **2016 Census Quickstats** provides analysis and comparison of census data. You can search for any location in Australia. The following link compares data on Melbourne, Victoria and Australia. http://www.censusdata.abs.gov.au/census_services/getproduct/census/2016/quickstat/2GMEL

▶ **Community Profiles** are excellent tools for researching, planning and analysing geographic areas for a number of social, economic and demographic characteristics. A

Community Profile provides a comprehensive statistical picture of an area in Excel format, providing data relating to people, families and dwellings, covering most topics on the Census form. http://www.abs.gov.au/websitedbs/D3310114.nsf/Home/2016%20Census%20Community%20Profiles

3.2 Civic participation methods

Different Ways to Engage Communities

Innovative approaches to community engagement have been developed by local councils, that are inclusive and work to bring different voices to the consultation. For example:

▶ **Conversation tents - Port Phillip City Council:** can be set up anywhere in the municipality – parks, recreation centres, libraries, at council events and so on – giving different groups opportunities to comment. https://haveyoursay.portphillip.vic.gov.au/2393/documents/2089

▶ **Public Drop-in Sessions – Mildura Rural City Council:** hosting a short series of sessions at different locations and different times of day gives more people an opportunity to comment. http://www.mildura.vic.gov.au/Services/Planning-Building/Strategic-Planning/Strategic-Planning-Projects-Strategies/Current-Strategic-Planning-Projects/Alfresco-Dining-and-Street-Trader-Policy-Review

▶ **Listening posts - Monash City Council:** To make it easier for residents to discuss any local issues with us, we hold 'listening posts' in local neighbourhoods on weekends and during the week. https://www.monash.vic.gov.au/About-Us/Council/Have-Your-Say/Listening-Posts-in-local-neighbourhoods

Engagement Tools

Using ethnic news platforms (radio especially), focus groups and workshops are good methods for engaging people from culturally and linguistically diverse communities and giving them a voice in your decision making process.

Exhibitions, open house and public conversations are good methods to inform communities and raise awareness about an issue. Be sure to include translated materials and arrange to have interpreters on hand to facilitate engagement.

The following table indicates which methods can be used to meet purposes of:

▶ **informing** the public about services and what you plan to do,

▶ **seeking views** on your policies and services and more active participation, and

▶ **participation and partnership** where issues and needs are jointly discussed and assessed.

The table provides an indication on the appropriateness of the method depending on the size, nature and objective of the particular exercise. More solid dots show the method more closely meets the purpose.[52]

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52 Racial Equity Tools: https://www.racialequitytools.org/search/results/eyJyZXN1bHRfcGFnZSI6InNlYXJjaFwvcmVzdWx0cyIsImtleXdvcmRzIjoiY29uc3VsdGluZyJ9

Consulting Method	Informing	Seeking Views	Participation & Partnership
Campaigns	●●●	●○○	○○○
Exhibitions	●●●	●○○	○○○
Local Press/Media Release	●●●	●○○	○○○
Leaflets and Newsletters	●●●	●●○	○○○
Circulating documents	●●●	●●○	○○○
Surveys	●○○	●●●	●○○
Public Meetings	●●●	●●○	●○○
Workshops	●●○	●●●	●●○
Focus Groups	●○○	●●●	●●○
Expert Panel	●○○	●●●	●●○
Open House	●●●	●○○	●○○
Key Stakeholder Interviews	●○○	●●●	●○○
Public Conversation	●●●	●●○	●○○
Websites	●○○	○○○	○○○

World Cafe

The World Café is a simple, effective and adaptable approach that can be modified to meet a wide variety of needs. The basic model comprises:

6. **Setting** – a café environment with small round tables equipped with butcher's paper, coloured pens, and so on to facilitate small group discussion (4-5 people).

7. **Welcome and Introduction** – host/facilitator provides welcome and introduction to the World Café process, setting the context and etiquette.

8. **Small Group Rounds** – 'rounds' allow participants to visit each table for around twenty minutes of discussion, before moving on to another discussion table. A 'table host' welcomes the next group and briefly fills them in on what happened in the previous round.

9. **Questions** – each round is prefaced with a question specially crafted for the context and purpose of the World Café. The same questions can be used for more than one round, or they can be built upon to focus the conversation or guide its direction.

10. **Harvest** – participants can be invited to share insights or discussion points with the larger group. These results are reflected visually in a variety of ways, most often using graphic recording in the front of the room.

Visit the World Café website for resources: http://www.theworldcafe.com/

CALD-COM Storyboard series

Think about adapting your message in story board form. Some Australians come from cultures where 'messaging' relies on oral storytelling traditions. Storytelling is a way to assist the take up of new information and learn more effortlessly how our society works.

Once participants engage with a story through a series of images, the need for translations becomes less important. There is a universal need for symbols that are easy to recognise and understand.

Moreland City Council has a tradition of storyboards that has been successful and replicated elsewhere. The CALD COM Handbook is available at: https://engage.environment.nsw.gov.au/10002/documents/22547

Mildura Rural City Council has produced tailored storyboard for rural community use, available at: http://www.mildura.vic.gov.au/Services/Health-Safety/Community-Preparedness

3.3 Urban planning matters

The Victorian Civil and Administrative Tribunal (VCAT)

The VCAT Planning and Environment List interprets Victoria's planning legislation. VCAT online forms, guides and resources are available at: https://www.vcat.vic.gov.au/resources

Planning decisions associated with places of worship have proved to be contentious in some situations. These VCAT decisions provide information regarding the interpretation of planning law in Victoria.

▶ **Melbourne Masjid Mosque, Narre Warren North, Sep 2004.** Mosque for Muslims of Fiji Indian background. Casey City Council initially refused the permit. VCAT granted approval with amendments to the plans, a reduction to the standard car parking requirement and access to Belgrave-Hallam Road, in accordance with the endorsed plans. *Islamic Education and Welfare Association of Dandenong v Casey CC [2004] VCAT 1850*

▶ **Keysborough Mosque, Dandenong, Nov 2005.** Council refused a planning permit for redevelopment of the existing place of worship. The key issue was whether parking impacts were acceptable. VCAT considered that the proposed on-site car parking spaces were acceptable and approved the permit. *Dandenong Islamic Society v Dandenong CC [2005] VCAT 2501*

▶ **Kyabram Street, Coolaroo, July 2014.** This case concerned the use and development of a place of worship, in the form of a mosque for Shi'ite Muslims, on land next door to an existing Church with a congregation of Assyrian Christians. Hume City Council (Council) received over a thousand objections to the proposal on a variety of grounds. These included grounds not related to the proximity of the existing church, but many objectors did raise this issue. In August 2013, the Council resolved to grant a planning permit subject to conditions. *Rutherford & Ors v Hume CC (includes Summary) (Red Dot) [2014] VCAT 786*

▶ **Omar bin Al Kattab Mosque, Cramer Street, Preston, Nov 2015.** Melbourne's first mosque had been altered on three previous occasions. Over 45 years ago, a place of worship was approved on the subject land. In 2015 local residents were strongly opposed to a permit application for construction of alterations and additions to the existing place of worship. Concerns related to the ongoing and growing impacts of the mosque on their amenity particularly with respect to parking, traffic movement, noise and lighting. Darebin City Council initially refused the permit. The VCAT decision set aside Councils decision. *The Islamic Society of Victoria Incorporated v Moreland CC (Correction) [2015] VCAT 1847*

▶ **Australian Islamic Centre, Feb 2009.** The initial proposal for the centre by Newport Islamic Society was referred by the council to a Planning Panel from the Ministry of Planning which approved the project with some amendments. The permit was issued by Hobson's Bay City Council on the 17 Feb 2009. Three previous proposals to establish a centre in different locations were not

successful for a variety of reasons.
https://www.australianislamiccentre.org/

- Newport mosque had to get ministerial approval to be rezoned for religious use. That process took more than four years and involved combating some community resistance. The architect described the design as a prism through which the wider Australian community will view Islam. Retrieved 9 March 2018: http://www.afr.com/brand/afr-magazine/why-glenn-murcutt-insisted-this-melbourne-mosque-have-no-minaret-20160509-goq2f1#ixzz59E0Hc5vP

▶ **Ararat Mosque, Jan 2015.** Ararat Mayor Paul Hooper believes a new mosque will continue to strengthen the relationship between the municipality's Islamic and non-Islamic residents. Council unanimously voted to grant a planning permit for a mosque in Baird Street, about a kilometre from Ararat's central business district, at a meeting last month. Cr Hooper said he did not believe Ararat's non-Islamic residents would object to a mosque. "They are valued members of our community." The Wimmera Mail Times, 5 January 2015. Retrieved 9 March 2018: http://www.mailtimes.com.au/story/2798210/ararat-mosque-will-strengthen-islamic-and-non-islamic-relationships-paul-hooper/

▶ **Sikh Temple, Keilor North, Jun 2016.** Brimbank City Council granted planning permit. At the completion of the advertising period, 18 objections had been received. The main issues raised relate to inappropriate location and zone for a place of worship, no support provided by the Planning Scheme provisions, amenity concerns such as noise, activity, dust and odour, loss of ambience and tranquillity of the area, increased traffic, poor parking provision, unsuitable (gravel) road access to the site, environmental issues, previous enforcement issues, and perceived misrepresentation of the proposal. A petition containing 60 signatures in support of the proposal was also received.

3.4 Citizens in the multicultural state

The ideal multicultural state fairly accommodates diversity in its laws and public institutions, and is one in which the intercultural citizen feels comfortable dealing with diversity in their individual interactions.[53]

Generally speaking, there are three inter-connected ideas that are common to multicultural states:

a) The state is seen as belonging equally to all citizens.

b) Socially inclusive policies are in place that recognise and accommodate cultural, linguistic and religious diversity.

c) Acknowledgement of historic injustice and the offering of amends to Indigenous communities.[54]

> **Interculturalism plays an important role in sustaining the just institutions of a multicultural state, and something that we have a duty to support.**
>
> **Kymlicka 2003**

'Citizenship' is a term that also designates a relationship between the individual and the state, and refers typically to membership in a political community. Different models of citizenship rest upon different images of the nature of the state, and/or on different images of the nature of the individuals who belong to it.[55] In Australia citizenship is framed within a multicultural policy context.

Multicultural policy is also designed to nurture and reinforce intercultural skills and knowledge at the level of the individual. The intercultural dispositions encouraged within individual citizens help to support and reinforce the institutions of the multicultural state.[56] This

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53 Kymlicka, 2003.

54 Ibid.

55 Ibid.

56 Ibid.

proposition supports the general multicultural state principle that the state belongs equally to all citizens.

3.5 Australian Government – three levels

The Commonwealth

Established by the Australian Constitution, the federal parliament has responsibility for areas that affect the whole nation. Under the Australian Constitution the states have their own parliaments.

The Australian Constitution

The Constitution sets out the relevant powers for each aspect of Australian government. It controls what governments can or cannot do with regard to passing laws and gives direction for the types of laws that particular governments can make.

In addition to the national Constitution, each Australian state has its own constitution. Local Government Authorities are constituted under state legislation. Commonwealth legislation takes precedence; section 109 of the Australian Constitution states that if the Commonwealth and a state Parliament both pass laws on the same subject, the Commonwealth law overrules the state law to the extent of any inconsistency.

The Constitution (Parliamentary Reform) Act 2003 (Vic) established local government as a 'distinct and essential' tier of government, giving Councils the powers to make local laws and levy rates.[57] *The Local Government Act 1989* (Vic) prescribes the functions and powers of local government authorities.[58]

Australian policy supports multiculturalism

The Commonwealth

The Australian Constitution sets out the relevant powers for each aspect of Australian government. It controls what governments can or cannot do with regard to passing laws and gives direction for the types of laws that particular governments can make.

Each Australian state also has its own constitution, and local government authorities are constituted under state legislation. Commonwealth legislation overrides state legislation where there is inconsistency (s.109).[59]

The *Australian Human Rights Commission Act 1986* established the Australian Human Rights Commission (the Commission) and gives it functions in relation to a number of international instruments.[60] The Commission has statutory responsibilities under the following laws to investigate and conciliate complaints:

▶ *Age Discrimination Act 2004*

▶ *Disability Discrimination Act 1992*

▶ *Racial Discrimination Act 1975*

▶ *Sex Discrimination Act 1984*

The Australian Government multicultural policy (2017) - *Multicultural Australia: United, Strong, Successful* - reaffirms the Government's commitment to a culturally diverse and harmonious society.[61] The statement outlines the strategic direction and priorities for multicultural policy in Australia. 'Sharing our cultural heritage is part of celebrating what it means to be Australian, and helps everyone feel included in our society.'

Available at: https://www.homeaffairs.gov.au/LifeinAustralia/Documents/MulticulturalAffairs/english-multicultural-statement.pdf

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57 *Constitution (Parliamentary Reform) Act 2003* (Vic) ss.3F, 82, 86, and 158, Parts 3 and 8.

58 The Act is currently under review with a view to creating an appropriate balance of normative, enabling and prescriptive provisions in the Act (2018).

59 *The Commonwealth of Australia Constitution Act 1900*, s.109 states that if the Commonwealth and a state Parliament both pass laws on the same subject, the Commonwealth law overrules the state law to the extent of any inconsistency.

60 The Australian Human Rights Commission (AHRC) has a number of information brochures 'Know Your Rights' available at: https://www.humanrights.gov.au/about/brochures-know-your-rights

61 Further information available on the Australian Government Department of Social Services website at: https://www.homeaffairs.gov.au/LifeinAustralia/Documents/MulticulturalAffairs/english-multicultural-statement.pdf

States and territories

Under state constitutions, state governments are responsible for state governance. The state constitutions also establish local government authorities within each state, to look after the particular needs of their local communities.

Australian States can make laws that relate to matters primarily of state interest, including:

▶ schools

▶ public transport

▶ forests

▶ hospitals

▶ utilities (i.e. electricity and water supply)

▶ community services

▶ roads and railways

▶ mining and agriculture

▶ consumer affairs

▶ police

▶ prisons

▶ ambulance services

Further information available at: http://www.peo.gov.au/learning/closer-look/governing-australia/making-laws.html

Victoria, human rights and anti-discrimination

In Victoria the Victorian Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission (VHREOC) administers the following Acts that protect the human rights of citizens and promote equal opportunity.

▶ *Equal Opportunity Act 2010* - makes discrimination, sexual harassment and victimisation against the law in many areas of public life, such as employment, education, accommodation, and providing goods and services.

▶ *Racial and Religious Tolerance Act 2001* - makes racial and religious vilification against the law. Racial and religious vilification is behaviour that incites or encourages hatred, serious contempt, revulsion or severe ridicule against another person or group of people because of their race or religion.

▶ *Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities Act 2006* - is a law that requires the Victorian Government, local councils and other public authorities to act consistently with Charter rights and to consider human rights when making decisions, developing policies and providing services. The Commission does not handle complaints related to the Charter. Charter complaints can be made to the Victorian Ombudsman in relation to most public authorities.

A human-rights based approach to community engagement can improve participation in decision making, particularly for those groups that traditionally find it difficult to contribute to government decision making, such as children and young people, older people, and people from diverse cultural and linguistic backgrounds.

The Victorian Government's Multicultural Policy Statement - *Victoria's Multicultural Policy Statement: Victorian. And proud of it* - encourages the whole community to recognise that Victoria's diversity is our greatest strength. Available at: https://proud.vic.gov.au/wp-content/uploads/2017/02/Victorian-And-Proud-of-it-MPS-180207.pdf

Local government authorities (local Councils)

Councils comprise the level of government closest to the people. Established by state legislation. Local government is not included in the Australian Constitution.

Local government is recognised in the *Victorian Constitution Act 1975* as 'a distinct and essential tier of government'. Section 74 states that democratically elected councils are to ensure 'the peace, order and good government of each municipal district'.

Victoria has 79 councils representing over 5.5 million people. Councils are democratic bodies invested with broad powers to serve local community needs, including functions related

to the peace, order and good government of the municipality.[62]

Councils regulate or manage services and activities. Councils can deliver services adapted to the needs of the community they serve. *The Local Government Act 1989* (Vic) provides for the establishment and operation of councils. The purposes and functions of local government are defined under the Act which provides the legal framework for establishing and administering Councils. *The Local Government Act 1989* (Vic) is currently under review with a view to creating an appropriate balance of normative, enabling and prescriptive provisions in the Act (2018).

Councils make by-laws about local matters and provide services. They are responsible for:

▶ community services such as maternal child health and aged care

▶ domestic animal regulation

▶ town planning

▶ local roads, footpaths, cycle ways, street signage and lighting

▶ building approvals and inspections

▶ parking

▶ recreational facilities such as parks, sports fields and swimming pools

▶ land and coast care programs

▶ sewerage

▶ cultural facilities, including libraries, art galleries and museums

▶ waste management and recycling

Local councils are also responsible for a wide range of services and functions under various other Acts of Parliament that are administered by different Ministers and State Government departments. Some councils have responsibilities under more than 120 different Victorian pieces of legislation. These include matter related to:

▶ land use planning

▶ building control

▶ some public health services

▶ domestic animal control

▶ roads and traffic

▶ litter control

▶ parking

All Victorian legislation can be viewed at: http://www.legislation.vic.gov.au/

Many Councils have a multicultural diversity plan for the municipality. The Municipal Association of Victoria maintains a network for local government staff responsible for and interested in culturally inclusive multicultural services and policy development.

CLOSER LOOK SERIES available at the Parliamentary Education Office: http://www.peo.gov.au/uploads/peo/docs/closer-look/CloserLook_Constitution.pdf

Land use planning in Victoria

Land Use Planning in Victoria is governed by the Planning and Environment Act 1987 which sets the legal framework for the planning system. Councils are the responsible authority for local planning matters primarily assessing permit applications against the planning scheme. Decisions may require public notice and engagement.

Each Victorian municipality is covered by a planning scheme that regulates the use, development and protection of that land. Planning schemes set out the planning rules – the state and local policies, zones, overlays and provisions about specific land uses that inform planning decisions.

The vision for the municipality is part of the planning scheme known as the Municipal Strategic Statement (MSS), developed by council with input from the community.

Planning schemes can only be changed through a formal amendment process, and permit application decisions must be consistent with the planning scheme.

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62 *The Local Government Act 1989* (Vic) is currently under review with a view to creating an appropriate balance of normative, enabling and prescriptive provisions in the Act (2018). Further information is available at the Review of the Local Government Act 1989, Discussion Paper. Victorian Department of Environment, Land, Water & Planning 2015. http://www.yourcouncilyourcommunity.vic.gov.au/14184/documents/25006

Development applicants and objectors can appeal a planning permit decision and go to the planning umpire, the Victorian Civil and Administrative Tribunal (VCAT), who assess a proposal's merits under planning legislation. If an applicant or objector wants to appeal a VCAT decision, the next step is the Supreme Court, where the decision is reviewed on matters of planning law.

Victorian Ombudsman

Citizens have a right to question government decisions. When you make a complaint to the Victorian Ombudsman about a government action or decision, she can look into it, tell you what occurred, and whether it was reasonable or unreasonable.

The Ombudsman can also make recommendations to the government body involved about its conduct. While there are some arms of government that are outside the Ombudsman's jurisdiction, such as the judiciary, almost all levels of Victorian state and local government come within it. Onsite interpreter is available at: 1300 655 082. https://www.ombudsman.vic.gov.au/

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