

Better Planning for Queensland

Planning Act 2016 / Plan Making

Draft community engagement toolkit for planning – submission form

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Section of the community engagement toolkit	Comments
Overall comments on community engagement toolkit	<p>It is particularly important, now that there is now more discretion provided to the local and state government as to how public notification will be required to be undertaken under the new planning framework, that this toolkit is available to ensure that the decision as to how community engagement is undertaken is well-informed.</p> <p>While it is not a statutory document, the toolkit and consequent strategies developed by local government also set an expected standard of community engagement that local communities can refer to if they feel engagement has not been adequate.</p> <p>The state government wants this toolkit to be “be recognised as the main repository for leading practice community engagement in Queensland for the planning system” and intends to update the tool in response to feedback and current engagement trends. OSCAR would strongly endorse this intent and hopes councils will adopt this toolkit and that it will be a dynamic document that constantly evolves based on community experience in future.</p>

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Section of the community engagement toolkit	Comments
	<p>This toolkit needs to be more than a “feel-good” document that councils place on their websites but do nothing to implement.</p> <p>There needs to be better guidance on minimum standards for engagement. It is not sufficient to include a statement in the toolkit that Councils should implement the guidelines and practices outlined.</p> <p>Whilst the community can point to the guidelines and principles outlined in the toolkit, if there is no obligation for Council to act in accordance with these, there is no effective method of influencing council behaviour. This is of significant concern to OSCAR and its member organisations.</p> <p>What can a community do if their council is non-compliant in terms of community engagement on planning issues? The state government, and the Department in particular, must not walk away from a responsibility to provide oversight over councils in situations where there is a failure to engage the community properly. The publication of this toolkit, of itself, is not enough.</p> <p>We recommend that, over time, numerous case studies of good practice are provide in the toolkit or can be easily accessed from links contained in the toolkit.</p> <p>OSCAR also understands the importance of meaningful community education, to ensure better quality planning decision making that meets the needs of all stakeholders.</p> <p>We recommend that the toolkit provides more specific and clear recommendation that community engagement be undertaken:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • prior to a development application being submitted, to assist in better community understanding and improve the potential social licence of the development; and • multiple times for local planning instruments – to demonstrate the draft and then the version incorporating suggested feedback from the initial consultation.

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	OSCAR also recommends that the toolkit encourages, as standard practice, that local and state government implement email lists and social media to assist in advertising public planning consultation opportunities more widely but we recognise that traditional methods such as newspaper advertisements, on-site notification and hard copy mail are still necessary to ensure those without computers are not excluded from appropriate levels of consultation.

Part 1 – About the toolkit	
Overall comments	Generally support and endorse this section.
Specific comments on sections	OSCAR believes that the development assessment process should require public notification and engagement and therefore the tools in this toolkit should also be applied to development assessment processes.
Part 2 – Guiding principles	
Overall comments	Support and endorse this section.
Specific comments on sections	
Tool – Core community engagement principles	We support the principles outlined in this section, particularly the identification of “timeliness”. Too often community response timeframes are too short to facilitate adequate responses from community groups and individuals who do not have the resources of councils, town planners and developers.
Tool – IAP2 public participation spectrum	

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Part 3 – Developing a community engagement plan	
Overall comments	Support and endorse this section. OSCAR would endorse the use of a sample case study at the beginning of each table.
Specific comments on sections	
Tool – Checklist for developing an engagement plan	
Tool – Aligning community engagement to stakeholder impact levels	
Tool – Listing negotiable and non-negotiable items	
Tool – Stakeholder understanding	
Tool – Stakeholder interest and influence matrix	
Tool – Checklist for identifying stakeholder needs	
Tool – Stakeholder prioritisation table	Yes, the inclusion of a completed example stakeholder prioritisation table be very useful as a guide.
Tool – Example community engagement action plan	Again, a completed plan would be very useful as an example.
Part 4 – Selecting community engagement tools	
Overall comments	Generally support and endorse this section.
Specific comments on sections	
Online engagement platforms	
Creative ideas - trending	

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Tool – Critical success factors for engagement	OSCAR endorses the importance of timely community engagement and believes the critical success factors identified are appropriate.
Tool – Choosing the right engagement tools – options matrix	<p>This appears to be a comprehensive identification of activity options which has been presented in a logical manner and should prove useful in determining which activities are appropriate for a particular context.</p> <p>We believe that it would be useful to include the other tools that the department has identified (listed in the <i>Have your say</i> section on page 31 of the draft) in the matrix. The value of having as many options as possible identified, and listed, would outweigh the fact that the table would be longer as a result.</p> <p>Notes:</p> <p>A presentation suggestion for the final version of this document: Please ensure that the 2 rows of column headings at the top of the matrix are repeated at the top of each subsequent page of the matrix.</p> <p>Online survey tools such as Survey Monkey (although not perhaps the free variant) do allow construction of quite complex questions and the capacity to download survey data for analysis in software tools like Microsoft Excel or statistical packages.</p>
Part 5 – Engaging with specific groups	
Overall comments	Support and endorse this section.
Tool – General considerations checklist	
Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander People	
Older people	

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Young people	
People with a disability	
People from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds	
Disadvantaged and homeless	
Part 6 – Content development	
Overall comments	<p>Support and endorse this section.</p> <p>Particularly agree with the introductory comment:</p> <p><i>“Great content that hooks your stakeholders and interests them enough to find out more can make or break your engagement process. Just printing a 200-page draft plan or document and leaving it in the local council or library office is no longer effective. People are too busy and have an expectation that the information comes to them directly.”</i></p> <p>It is unrealistic to expect community members to download and print very large documents; nor is it reasonable to make them available in council venues in the expectation that people can access them adequately in that way.</p>
Tool – 10 tips for creating engagement content	
Tool – Examples of questions to guide engagement material content	
Part 7 – Implementing your strategy	
Overall comments	Support and endorse this section.

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Specific comments on sections	
Tool – Example Excel database stakeholder engagement register	
Part 8 – Feedback and reporting	
Overall comments	<p>Support and endorse this section.</p> <p>We absolutely agree with the first paragraph – particularly:</p> <p><i>“Stakeholders may not always agree with the outcome or decision made, but if the process by which the decision was made is understood, then the likelihood of it being accepted can be greater.”</i></p>
Specific comments on sections	
Tool – Checklist for following up after engagement	
Part 9 – Success stories	
Overall comments	Support and endorse this section.
Tool – Case studies template	<p>Would you be interested in having access to an engagement plan prepared for a successful project or would you be more interested in components of an engagement plan?</p> <p>Yes – we would strongly encourage having access to a case study engagement plan. While councils may not require this, individuals and community groups would benefit from having exemplars that represent good practice and can be used to benchmark council performance.</p>