

bestvaluevictoria

Community Consultation

Resource Guide



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message from the president, victorian local governance association

Quality consultation and engagement are building blocks for good governance. Local governments that inform, consult and listen to their local communities, and communities which are engaged and participate in their governance, make for healthy democracies and involved citizens.

Consultation and engagement are high priorities for the Victorian Local Governance Association (VLGA). The VLGA's membership, which consists of local governments, community groups and individual citizens, rates consultation and engagement as one of the most important issues for the VLGA to address. Accordingly, the VLGA is working towards providing support and resources to local governments and communities which are seeking to further develop their consultation capacities.

Consultation is a significant element of the Best Value Victoria Principles, which are currently being introduced in Victoria with the participation of all Victorian local governments. Best Value Victoria will be enhanced by effective consultation between local governments and their communities. Given the priority the VLGA has placed on consultation and engagement, it is pleased to be a partner with the Victorian Government in developing the resource materials and conducting the 'Best Value Victoria: Community Consultation' seminars.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Julie Hansen".

Cr Julie Hansen
President, Victorian Local Governance Association

minister's foreword

The introduction of the Best Value Principles provides an exciting opportunity for Victorian local governments to reconnect with their communities.

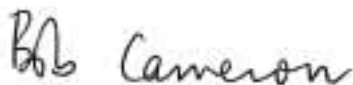
The Best Value Principles provide a renewed flexibility for councils to develop and deliver services that are more responsive to community needs.

When the work of the Best Value Victoria Taskforce drew to a close in late 2000, it recommended that councils would require some assistance with the introduction of Best Value. The State Government, while respecting the autonomy of individual councils to implement Best Value their own way, does recognise that it has an obligation to ensure the local government sector has the necessary tools and expertise to implement Best Value effectively.

A series of support initiatives for the sector are being developed by the Local Government Division in partnership with the peak local government bodies. These initiatives include seminars and training days for councils on the Best Value Principles and producing guidelines for topics such as procurement and competitive neutrality.

I am pleased to offer to all councils this resource guide on the Best Value Principle of Community Consultation. Good community consultation and effective engagement between council and community will bring about a marked change for the local government sector. Communities feel more connected and a part of local decision-making processes if they are truly engaged and have the opportunity to contribute to the governance of their municipality.

The Local Government Division has worked in partnership with the Victorian Local Governance Association to produce this material and organise the seminars that we held across Victoria in May. These aim to provide councillors, council staff and service providers with the tools to enable them to adequately plan and implement community consultation in most circumstances, whether in a small rural council or a large metropolitan municipality. Much of the information contained here has been informed by work undertaken by many councils and I am delighted with the collaborative learning that is occurring across the sector.



Bob Cameron MP
Minister for Local Government



part 1: best value victoria – consultation

1.0 Aim/Introduction

This paper is a resource for councils and communities aiming to improve their knowledge and practice of community consultation. It was developed for use in seminars conducted by the Local Government Division of the Department of Infrastructure and the Victorian Local Governance Association (VLGA) on community consultation in the context of Best Value Victoria. In addition, feedback from the seminars held in May–June 2001 has resulted in the revision of the documents to incorporate suggested changes and/or additions.

The content is informed by the many community consultation strategies and policies which have been developed by Australian local governments and by many other resources. These are listed in Part 3 of this document.

2.0 Best Value Victoria Principles

Best Value Victoria is a policy that aims to enhance councils' capacities to deliver better services to the community. This is to be achieved by councils applying the six Best Value Principles to all their services and the way in which they govern. The application of the principles of quality and cost standards, accessibility, responsiveness, continuous improvement, community consultation and reporting, will ensure that council services meet the needs of the community.

Best Value Victoria is a whole-of-organisation approach that affects all aspects of council business and personnel, from the councillors through to service providers, in all services including the governance aspects of council. Incorporating Best Value into councils' corporate plans will ensure that this whole-of-organisation approach is adopted.

In order to meet the needs of their communities, and to give effect to the community consultation principle, councils need to determine how and when they are going to consult.

The Best Value legislation states that councils:

- must take into account community expectations and values when establishing quality and cost standards
- develop a program of regular consultation with its community in relation to the services it provides.

The *Best Value Victoria Guide* that was produced in late 2000 states that consultation should take place early in the implementation of the principles for specific services, so that councils can be sure that the principles of quality and cost standards, accessibility, responsiveness and continuous improvement are informed by consultation.

There are no right or wrong ways to implement the Best Value Principles. What's important is that individual councils work together with staff and the community to define and apply the principles for their own municipalities.

3.0 Consultation and good governance

Community consultation enables governments to govern better and communities to be more engaged and connected. Active, informed citizens who are involved in the life of their communities and who take an interest in their governments, will give rise to better candidates for office, more transparent and accountable decision-making and, generally, better governments. In a well-developed local community, the council and the community are mutually reinforcing pillars of representative democracy and good governance.

Community involvement in the work of councils is a prerequisite of good governance. Consultation is a critical part of fostering community involvement and community engagement.

Good consultation is:

| | |
|------------------------|--|
| Good governance | It aims to better understand the aspirations of communities and provides citizens with ways to provide input into the processes of direction setting and priorities. |
| Good business | It enhances the quality of services provided. |
| Good management | It works to achieve better results for everyone. |

part 2: engagement and effective consultation practices



1.0 Definitions

Terms need to be defined to ensure clarity. Please note that since this document is focused on local governments and their communities, the term 'council' will be always used to signify the governing authority.

Local governments exist to govern their communities, good governance is achieved when local governments are responsive to communities' needs and communities are engaged and participate in governance activities. Consultation is the means by which local governments inform themselves of communities' attitudes and opinions.

Good governance

Democratic governance exists when a government governs for and on behalf of its community. Good democratic governance occurs when governments govern as a result of being elected. Citizens exercise their rights and responsibilities by being informed and engaged.

The sector has developed a Code of Good Governance that includes features of legitimacy of government representation, policy enactment, community participation, accountability and democratic leadership. This is a dynamic Code which is open to constant reviews.

Engagement

Engagement is achieved when the community is and feels part of the overall governance of that community. It is informed, connected and feels it has a role to play. Activities that can be part of engagement are:

- gathering and provision of information
- consultation
- participation.

Councils should be committed to ensuring that all groups have an equal opportunity to participate and be involved and should take active steps to ensure that traditionally marginalised groups have the opportunity to participate and be engaged.

Councils that work at engaging their communities through ongoing activities and policies (for example, festivals, 'know your parks', etc.) create an environment in which more effective consultation can occur.

Engagement, by this definition is more of an outcome. It occurs when there is good ongoing information flow, consultation and participation between a council and its community.

Consultation can, therefore, be seen as part of the overall concept of engagement. Community engagement is a characteristic of democratic governance.

Participation

Participation means that the community is involved in governance activities.

Consultation

The process of informed communication between the council and the community on an issue prior to the council making a decision or determining a direction on that issue.

Key elements

- It is a process, not an outcome.
- It recognises the council has the mandate to be the decision-maker and refers to the process by which the authority gathers information in order to make a decision. Consultation impacts on a decision through influence, rather than power.
- It also recognises that it is up to each council to decide what issues it will consult on.
- The definitions both stress the point that consultation is about input into decision-making, not joint decision-making or decision-making by referendum.



2.0 Principles of good consultation

The following principles underlie all good consultation practice. As such they are appropriate for consultation in the context of Best Value Victoria.

Focus

Everyone should be clear on why consultation is being undertaken. Every significant project, policy development and strategy should have a consultation plan as part of the overall project plan. Refer to section 5 for more detail about how to develop a consultation plan.

There must be a statement as to what the purpose of the consultation is. It should then be clear to all involved as to why the consultation is happening and this will help to ensure that appropriate methods are used and the consultation is properly targeted.

In particular, it is important to identify and clarify whether the consultation is 'closed' (that is, do you agree or disagree with Proposition X?) or 'open' (what do you think the issues are in dealing with situation or problem X?).

It will also help participants' understanding of the process and their expectations of the outcomes.

It is also desirable to identify the start and finish of the consultation process. It is helpful when participants are aware of when consultation is finished and decision-making is to take place.

- CHECKLIST**
- Why is this consultation being undertaken?
 - What exactly am I consulting about – am I looking for comment on a draft recommendation or conclusion (that is, a closed consultation) or am I generating ideas about an issue (that is, an open consultation)?
 - Is the start and finish of the consultation process clear?
 - How will the consultation improve the final outcome?

Inclusiveness, accessibility and diversity

All affected parties must be consulted. Care should be taken to ensure that all affected parties are identified. Some interests may be less immediately obvious than others, but may be just as important. The extent of consultation needs to be considered in the light of the significance of the project or issue.

The process should be accessible for all those who should be involved and they must be given an equal opportunity to be included. The council should take active steps to ensure that all interests are adequately represented.

The diverse nature of the Australian community must be recognised and issues of language and culture need to be addressed. The Ethnic Communities Council of Victoria (ECCV) can be consulted for advice on consulting with CALD (culturally and linguistically diverse) communities.

All groups and individuals should be actively encouraged to participate and any barriers to participation should be tackled. This is particularly relevant for groups and individuals who have traditionally not participated for reasons such as language, age or mobility.

The choice of venue can impact on the accessibility of the consultation process. An interesting, accessible venue can make it easier to attract people to participate.

Remember that staff, particularly frontline staff, can make an important contribution.

Councils should always try and take consultation to the target groups rather than making them come to you.

NB. The City of Maribyrnong's Consultation Strategy contains a useful section on consulting people with special needs.

CHECKLIST

- Who are the stakeholders with regard to the issue/s in question?
- Are there any groups of stakeholders which are difficult to access?
- What am I going to do to ensure that these people have the opportunity to be heard?
- How can I take the consultation to them?
- If a venue is involved, is it suitable and accessible?

Provision of information

Consultation should be on the basis of informed comment and input and this means that information must be made available, in an appropriate form, to those participating in the process.

Good information to those impacted by the issue and potential participants will result in better understanding, more informed input, better access to the process and a greater sense of ownership of the process and outcomes.

How the information is presented is important. Information should be easy to read, well set-out, interesting and feature pictures, graphics and cartoons where appropriate.

CHECKLIST

- What information am I providing to those people who are being consulted?
- Is the information adequate to ensure that they can express an informed opinion?
- Is the information provided in a way which is easy to understand and meaningful?
- Am I providing an adequate opportunity for people to receive the information or was it a 'one-off' item?

Timing

The consultation must be timed to ensure that the results of the consultation are able to influence the policy, planning and decision-making process.

The consultation must take place early enough in the decision-making process to ensure that its outcomes are able to be considered prior to the decisions being made. As a general rule, the earlier in the process it happens, the better. This means that consultation should occur on the scoping or identification of the issues rather than just on the final decision. It will also assist the credibility of the process if people feel that issues have not been resolved prior to consultation.

CHECKLIST

- At what stage of the process is consultation occurring?
- Is it early enough to help identify all the issues or is it merely seeking comment on already identified issues?
- Is it sufficiently early in the process for people to feel that the council is genuinely interested in their opinions?

Responsiveness and feedback

Consultation should be transparent and open and all issues raised should be responded to by the council. Where possible, participants should know at the start of a process how their input is to be used.

The council should be genuinely open to input and be prepared to take on new ideas. Participants should be clear as to how their input is being treated and how it might impact on the final decision. The council should respect the diverse range of interests and views which may exist around a particular issue and make genuine attempts to resolve conflicts, while recognising that it has the ultimate decision-making role.

The requirement to provide feedback can assist in ensuring that all input is considered in the decision-making process. The receipt of input makes participants feel that their participation has been valued. Feedback can be general, that is, it is often not practicable to provide a tailored response to each individual input, though the feedback should go to all participants.

Communicating the decision-making process, both at the beginning and end of the consultation may also help people feel that they were listened to, even if they disagree with the ultimate decision.

It may be appropriate at times for participants to be involved in the decision as to how their input is to be used.

- CHECKLIST**
- Is the decision-making process clear and has this been communicated with respondents?
 - Do I have a plan for how feedback is to be provided to respondents?

Evaluation

Consultation processes should be evaluated following the completion of decision-making to assess whether the goals of the consultation process have been achieved. In this way, the council is able to review and improve its consultation processes while also increasing the credibility of consultation.

Participants should be involved in evaluation processes wherever possible.

- CHECKLIST**
- Is evaluation part of the consultation plan?
 - Is there a commitment to undertake the evaluation?
 - How will my council use the outcomes from the evaluation to ensure better consultation practices in the future?
 - How will participants contribute to the evaluation process?

Resourcing

While not strictly a principle, adequate resourcing is fundamental to good consultation. Consultation involves both direct and in-kind resourcing and this needs to be identified when the consultation plan is being developed. Ideally these should be costed in when the budget for the overall issue or project is put together.

While, on the surface, resourcing consultation appears to add costs to an issue or project, in the long term investment in consultation can mean that the overall cost of an issue/project is less than it might have been, simply by getting it right and having community ownership.

- CHECKLIST**
- Has a proper consultation plan been developed as part of the project or issue planning?
 - Is there adequate resourcing for the consultation plan?

3.0 Methods of consultation

Various key methods of consultation are outlined below. It is suggested that there are two broad groups of consultation methods. The first is the **'pre-consultation'** group. These methods will sometimes constitute consultation in their own right, but more characteristically are means by which consultation is set up and information is provided to allow good consultation to occur subsequently.

The second group of methods is **'two-way or interactive consultation'**. These are more intensive and, in particular, more interactive methods of consultation.

This group has been further divided into two subgroups, **'traditional'** and **'new and innovative'**. The traditional subgroup includes more conventional methods which have been largely used up to now. The new and innovative subgroup have been developed more recently and are becoming more widely used.

The first group is presented as a list. This list can be considered as a consultation method in certain cases, but more often should be seen as a means of informing potential participants and the community about forthcoming issues which are to be the subject of consultation.

The second group is presented as a chart (P. 15) in which consultation options are identified for use when consultation for different types of issues, projects and strategies is being planned.

It should be noted that all these methods are not presented necessarily as 'stand-alone' options, but should be considered as part of a consultation strategy which reflects the previously mentioned principles of good consultation.



3.1 'Pre-consultation' methods

| METHOD | DESCRIPTION |
|---|--|
| Write a letter | This is a personally addressed letter to all affected households. It outlines the issue and invites comment. It always indicates where the comment should be directed within council. |
| Letterbox drop | This is a non-addressed leaflet or flyer that summarises the issues and invites feedback to council. The flyer indicates how that feedback can be given. |
| Council newsletter | This is the regular publication of council. It can carry articles about a major project, vision, policy or issue. If it is used for consultation, then the article must inform and encourage feedback. The newsletter is an important vehicle to report on the results of other consultations. |
| Special publications | These can range from a special newsheet to a brochure or a draft printed policy. They are designed to inform the consultation process. |
| Advertisements in the local newspapers | Advertisements in the news section of the local papers (except for statutory requirements) are an important means of advising the community about the matter under consultation and how they might have their say. |
| Media | This involves issuing media releases and conducting interviews with local journalists. If it is part of the consultative process, the council spokesperson must ensure that people are advised as to how they can comment on the issue in question and that feedback would be welcomed. |



3.2 *Interactive or two-way methods*

3.2.1 *Traditional methods*

Questionnaire

This is a statistically correct survey of particular attitudes, beliefs or information. It is conducted in-house or by independent survey specialists and may be done by telephone, written survey or a doorknock of individual households. A questionnaire may be targeted at a specific group, for example, users of a facility or service, or the general population.

Community meetings/Forums

These meetings are usually organised by the council and involve the bringing together of interested persons for information and discussion about an issue. These are generally held at a community venue, at the site of the matter under consultation, or at the council offices. These can be held on a general, ward or neighbourhood basis.

Focus groups/Workshops

These are discussion groups of between five and 20 people, usually led by a trained person (facilitator). The participants are invited because they are residents or because they have a particular interest, involvement or stake in the subject being discussed. The purpose is to find out the range of opinions that exist on a particular topic.

Steering/Advisory committee

These committees are made up of council and community representatives, established to provide input and overview for either a particular project or issue (steering committee) or on an ongoing basis on specific issues (advisory committee).

Community leaders

Community groups have their own systems of communication. In any consultation, community leaders play an important part in circulating information and receiving feedback.

Expert panel

A panel of experts and/or people who are interested in an issue can be established. Such a panel can either be on a case-by-case and time-limited basis or as a 'standing panel' which is convened whenever a relevant issues arises.

3.2.2 New and innovative methods

e-consultation

These electronic approaches are in early stages of use. The most commonly used forms are outlined below:

| METHOD | PURPOSE |
|--|--|
| Web sites | Information dissemination |
| Electronic discussion groups (including Usenets, email and, to some extent, chat rooms.) | Interaction between local government and citizen |

Simulations

A simulation involves the exploration of a scenario or situation to determine appropriate responses. Two such examples are as follows:

- **Hypotheticals**
Members of a panel of people play a particular role in a problem situation drawn from real life. The moderator asks questions of panel members and stimulates audience questions in order to generate debate on the topic.
- **Role plays**
Individuals act out specific roles in a problem situation drawn from real life. The range of applications for role plays includes interpersonal and group conflicts, testing alternative solutions, generating debate on difficult topics.

Charettes

This is a group exercise in which specific techniques are used to build up an option or options for an issue usually undertaken over a number of days. It is most frequently used for urban planning and design challenges. However, the charette is also appropriate for multi-stakeholder planning for social and community futures.

Large group methods

These are approaches that are often used for consultation on complex and/or strategic issues. They can accommodate numbers of participants ranging from dozens to hundreds, and have been used successfully over many years in business and community settings in Australia and overseas. Examples of this form of consultation include:

- **Search Conference/Future Search**
This is a tool for planning which includes main stakeholders in a carefully managed process, usually conducted over two days, that emphasises communication, mutual learning and participants taking responsibility for agreed outcomes. The goals are consensus on desired outcomes, and action plans to realise these.
- **Real Time Strategic Change**
This process brings together large groups of stakeholders with diverse knowledge and experience and often competing needs, each understanding a piece of the large, complex jigsaw that makes up an organisation or community. A carefully designed series of interactive steps enables the group to align their needs and aspirations, become motivated, and empower themselves to move towards necessary change.
- **Open Space Technology**
Open Space meetings operate on two basic premises: that the best people to discuss a subject are those who want to, not those who are forced to, and that people who have the chance to discuss things are the ones most likely to improve them. Open Space meetings have no predetermined speakers or workshops topics. With a minimal set of clear rules, they provide opportunities for people who care about an issue, or an organisation or a community, to identify what needs to be done and decide who will do what.
- **Appreciative Inquiry**
This is an approach to community analysis and learning that is uniquely designed for 'discovering, understanding and fostering innovations in social and organisational arrangements and processes.' The process involves interviewing and storytelling to draw on the best of the past and set the stage for effective visualisation of what might be.

4.0 *Issues about which consultation takes place*

Consultation methods will vary according to the issue. In the consultation chart, issues have been grouped together to assist people in their choice of consultation methods. They may not necessarily cover all issues and it is acknowledged that there may be a range of different approaches to grouping them.

Major strategies and policies

This covers the major strategic exercises that councils undertake. They are municipality-wide, involve the whole population and present complex consultation challenges. Consultation approaches on these issues go well beyond the placing of statutory advertisements, which, at best, serve to notify people who read them that the issue is under consideration.

Policies/Targeted strategies

This group includes policy and strategy development on issues which impact particular groups and/or areas.

Operational/Services

Services and operational issues are the focus of this category. It includes all service reviews which will be a key focus of Best Value.

Projects/Site specific

Issues which relate to a particular site or sites make up this group. It includes statutory building and planning matters and council developments

Performance

This group is made up of council-wide and individual service/issue assessments of council performance (often known as Council Satisfaction Surveys).



5.0 Consultation planning and process design

Choosing a method is only part of developing a consultation plan. An overall process must be designed to fit the particular issue.

In general, the process design might be as follows:

1. Identify the issue, project or policy about which consultation is to occur.
2. Ensure that a consultation plan is part of the overall project plan and that there is agreement that adequate resources will be committed to the consultation process.
3. Clearly identify the goal of the consultation process.
4. In order to use the chart, identify into which category the issue most closely fits.
5. Look at the consultation method options for that category of issue. The choice of option will depend on a number of factors including:
 - complexity of the issue
 - who the target groups (affected parties) are
 - whether the target groups are easy to access or not
 - whether the consultation will be 'open' or 'closed'
 - how much time and what level of resourcing is available
 - who in the council is managing/auspicing the consultation process and who will be doing the work.
6. Having selected a preferred method, test it against the 'Principles of Good Consultation' to ensure these issues are being addressed.
7. Make sure that advertising is eye-catching, distinctive and exciting.
8. When implementing the method, be sure that such matters as quality of venue and participant comfort are carefully handled. A good quality, interesting environment and good quality and plentiful refreshments will enhance the process.
9. Information should be easy to read, catchy and feature pictures and cartoons where appropriate. Make sure it provides participants with quality, even-handed information which will allow time to make informed comment on the issue in question.
10. Ensure that the participants are clear about the consultation process, how the information they provide is going to be used and how the decision will be made. Where possible, give participants the possibility of providing input into these issues.
11. Ensure feedback and evaluation processes are in place. Where possible, feedback should occur during as well as at the end of processes so that the benefits of feedback loops can be achieved.
12. Stick to agreed timelines and commitments. This will give participants more faith in the process
13. Be adventurous and creative. Don't be afraid to try something new and take advantage of the resource bases and support which is available to you from the Local Government Division, the VLGA and the Municipal association of Victoria (MAV).



6.0 Preparing a consultation strategy

It is a good idea for councils to prepare an overall consultation strategy. By endorsing such a strategy, councils are committing to supporting and resourcing good consultation practices.

1. Remember, many good local government consultation strategies exist. While council should prepare one in conjunction with its own community, lots of good ideas are around.
2. There are people and information at the Local Government Division (LGD) level and in the peak bodies, such as the VLGA and MAV, who can help.
3. It is a good idea to begin with a consultation process to highlight the issues around consultation in the community. It's also a good idea to get these ideas at the very start of the process of preparing a strategy.

4. Conduct extensive consultation inside the council.
The interests of councillors and different parts of the council are very different. Make sure all the types of issues over which consultation can occur are identified. Also, remember that staff have a contribution to make.
5. In-principle support from the council and senior management is critical. It is important that the decision-makers genuinely believe or are willing to accept that consultation enhances decision-making and is a legitimate aspiration of communities.
6. A structure of a consultation strategy might be as follows:
 - introduction – outlines why the council is developing a consultation strategy and the role consultation plays in the council's corporate plan
 - why council consults – the costs and benefits of consultation
 - principles of good consultation – council's statement of the principles which underpin good consultation
 - when council will consult – situations in which the council will consult its community
 - how council will consult – methods the council will use, depending on the issue in question.

Remember, this is only an indicative list and you need to structure your approach on your needs and situation.
7. A consultation strategy should include a commitment to incorporate consultation as part of all significant council activities and to make sure that consultation is appropriately resourced.
8. Consultation should occur on the draft consultation strategy.
9. The strategy should be a dynamic document and always be open to review and improvement.



7.0 Reporting on the principle of community consultation

Councils are required by the Local Government Act to report regularly (that is, at least one a year) to the community on their achievements in relation to all the Best Value Principles.

The Code of Reporting issued by the Minister for Local Government states that the report on the application of the principles is to be published either:

- as part of the report of operations in the annual report
- or
- as a separate Best Value report made available to the public.

Reporting on the application of the Best Value Principles also needs to be meaningful to the community and should, over time, serve to improve service and governance performance across the local government sector.

SCALE

- Occasionally appropriate
- Often appropriate
- Usually/Always appropriate

¹ This document has been developed on the basis of the collective experience of a number of councils and individuals and a review of some existing council consultation strategies. It is intended as a tool to assist councils in developing consultation strategies and approaches. Pre consultation methods are documented on page 7

| | | INTERACTIVE OR TWO-WAY CONSULTATION METHODS | | | | | | | | | | |
|------------------------------|--|---|---|--|---|---|--|--|--|--|--|---|
| | | CONSULTATION METHODS-Traditional | | | | | | | CONSULTATION METHODS-New and Innovative | | | |
| MAIN CATEGORY | SUBCATEGORIES | QUESTIONNAIRE TARGETED | QUESTIONNAIRE GENERAL | COMMUNITY MEETINGS/FORUMS | FOCUS GROUPS/WORKSHOPS | STEERING/ADVISORY COMMITTEES | COMMUNITY LEADERS | EXPERT PANELS | E-CONSULTATION | SIMULATION | CHARETTES | LARGE GROUP METHODS |
| | DEFINITIONS | Questionnaire aimed at particular group. | Questionnaire aimed at general population. | Open community meeting usually organised by council. | Small discussion which seeks to identify and/or explore issues. | Council/Community committee for one-off or ongoing issues. | Leaders of identifiable groups in community. | Panel of experts to advise either one-off or ongoing. | Use of Internet to consult. | Role playing, including hypotheticals. | Extended planning sessions, often used for urban and design challenges. | Large group sessions often looking at complex or strategic issues. |
| MAJOR STRATEGIES | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Corporate/Community plans | | | | | | | | | | | |
| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Annual plans | | | | | | | | | | | |
| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Budget/Long-term financial plan | | | | | | | | | | | |
| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Municipal public health plan | | | | | | | | | | | |
| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Municipal Strategic Statement | | | | | | | | | | | |
| POLICIES/TARGETED STRATEGIES | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Positioning policies (for example, drugs) | | | | | | | | | | | |
| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strategic plans (for example, Older Residents' Plan) | | | | | | | | | | | |
| OPERATIONAL/SERVICES | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Service planning (for example, future usage, service gaps) | | | | | | | | | | | |
| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Program/Service specific review (for example, home care, leisure facility) | | | | | | | | | | | |
| SITE/PROJECT SPECIFIC | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Building/Site developments – council (for example, new facility, upgrade) | | | | | | | | | | | |
| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Building/Site developments – non-council (for example, new homes, retail developments) | | | | | | | | | | | |
| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Land use/Zoning (for example, open space) | | | | | | | | | | | |
| PERFORMANCE | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Overall council | | | | | | | | | | | |
| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Specific service/Facility/Program | | | | | | | | | | | |
| | <p>GENERAL COMMENTS/HINTS</p> <p>For further information on the forms of consultation please refer to Resource Guide – Section 3.0.</p> | Seek expert advice in survey design to ensure validity. | Seek expert advice in survey design to ensure validity. | Be adventurous with locations and format (e.g., 'walk arounds'). Ensure sectional interests don't dominate by having a strong facilitator. | Can be useful to identify issues. Offer an incentive for people to participate (e.g., 'entry pass' to council leisure facility) | Use Advisory Committees for long-term issues and use Steering Committees for specific projects (with set time frame). | Good if interest groups/specific locations are involved. | Good when focusing on a specific issue. Need to create environment where people can suggest ideas freely. Develop a community 'skills' register (identifies people with particular areas of expertise) | Very early days but likely to expand rapidly and be a great method of consultation and communication with residents. | Innovative approach which may be a more interesting experience for some residents. | Charettes are becoming more common and provide an opportunity to undertake multi-stakeholder planning. | Examples of this method include: Search Conferences, Open Space Technology and Future Searches. |

part 3: resources for further information

Local government consultation strategies

- Cardinia Shire Council
- Colac Otway Shire
- Darebin City Council
- Hobsons Bay City Council
- Hume City Council
- Knox City Council
- Macedon Ranges Shire Council
- Maribyrnong City Council
- Maroondah City Council
- Moreland City Council
- Mornington Peninsula Shire
- Newcastle City Council
- Nillumbik City Council
- Wyndham City Council



Local Government Division, DOI

Best Value Principles Guide (framework)

Community consultation

Consultation and Government Victorian Council of Social Services 1981

Community Participation in Practice: A Practical Guide,
Institute for Science and Technology Policy, Murdoch University,
Western Australia, June 1997

*It's your House: community involvement in the procedures
and practices of the House of Representatives and its committees:*
House of Representatives Standing Committee on Procedure 1999
Australian Parliament.

Doing it Ourselves: Showing the Way, Final Report of the
Good Governance Panel, July 1999

Code of Good Governance, Victorian Local Governance Association
and Municipal Association of Victoria, May 2000

Building Partnerships between Councils and their Communities,
Stegley Foundation and Victorian Local Governance Association,
September 2000.

International web sites

Department of Environment, Transport and the Regions –
<http://www.local-regions.detr.gov.uk>

Department of Environment, Transport and the Regions –
Best Value in the UK
<http://www.local-regions.detr.gov.uk/bestvalue/bvindex.htm>

