

Planning Public Involvement: A Step-by-Step Guide

Anna Johnson and Jenny Cameron



Urban Research Program

**Practice and Policy Paper 1
September 2006**

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ISBN 1 920952 72 1

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Andrew Ross from Final Draft Consultancy Ltd provided extensive editorial assistance with the final preparation of this URP Practice and Policy paper.

The URP publications series is edited by Dr Jago Dodson, Research Fellow in the URP.

Acknowledgements

The authors acknowledge the invaluable support of staff from SEQ2021 and the Queensland Dept of Local Government and Planning. This research was funded through an Australian Research Council Linkage Project Grant (LP0211870), with the Dept of Local Government and Planning as the contributing Industry Partner.

The Urban Research Program acknowledges the generous support provided by Brisbane City Council for production of the Program's Issues and Research Papers.

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Introduction

Purpose

Structure

How this guidebook came about

What do we mean by public involvement?

Purpose

The best public involvement programs are the result of thorough and thoughtful planning undertaken well in advance of any public involvement activities. This guidebook provides straightforward step-by-step guidance on how to plan an effective public involvement strategy.

The guidebook is designed to assist industry, government, and non-government organisations that are using public involvement in small- and large-scale initiatives ranging from policy, planning and project development to service delivery.

Many guidebooks on public involvement focus on specific methods and techniques for how to involve the public. There are excellent resources on these topics (see the Resources section at the end of the guidebook for a selection).

This guidebook is different: it concentrates on the **planning** needed **before** selecting methods and techniques in order for the public involvement activities to be of value for both participants and organisers. Much of what is contained in this guidebook will seem like commonsense, yet it is surprising how many public involvement (PI) programs are run without the simple but careful planning that will ensure effective public involvement and lead to better decisions and outcomes 'on the ground'.

By following the PI planning process outlined in this guide, users will be able to develop a strategy that details:

- the overall goal for PI
- a plan for PI including the context of the PI exercise, why it is being conducted, who should be involved from the public and when, and the techniques that are most appropriate to use
- a plan for how to evaluate the PI strategy
- a plan for implementing the PI strategy, including a timeframe, resources and responsibilities.

The approach is based on three guiding principles:

- **Public involvement should be goal-driven.** The techniques of PI should be decided only after clear parameters have been established about the context of the PI exercise, why PI is being conducted, and who is to be involved and when in the decision-making process.
- **Public involvement planning should be participatory.** PI is a participatory exercise – so too is planning for PI. To ensure a high quality PI program, a range of stakeholders need to be involved in the planning. Central to this principle is a Public Involvement Planning (PIP) workshop, a collaborative exercise through which a range of stakeholders decide on the purpose and approach to PI.

- **Public involvement evaluation should be considered in the planning stage.** Through careful planning, the evaluation activities will be inseparably linked to the goals and objectives of a PI strategy.

Structure

This guidebook is split into three sections. The structure is designed to cater for different levels of knowledge and experience of PI.

Section A sets out the guiding principles of public involvement planning (PIP).

Section B describes how to undertake a PIP process based on the three guiding principles. It discusses who to include in planning PI, how to prepare useful background materials, what evaluation approaches to consider and how to produce a PI strategy. This section also provides an overview of the PIP workshop, which involves stakeholders in determining the purpose and approach to PI.

Section C focuses on the PIP workshop and includes guidance on preparation, presentations and activities. Readers who are familiar with PI processes may use this section to inform their existing practice, while readers who are less familiar with PI will be able to follow it in a step-by-step way.

How this guidebook came about

This guidebook is based on the authors' evaluation research of a regional planning exercise in south east Queensland. SEQ2021 was a large-scale collaborative process involving different levels of government, representatives from industry and non-government organisations, and the general public. The purpose of the research was to evaluate and provide feedback on each stage of PI so that subsequent stages could be modified and refined.¹

The first research activity was to evaluate the process of planning the PI program. It quickly became apparent that there was a lack of a clear and shared understanding of the aims and objectives of the PI program. As a result it was unclear how the results of PI would feed into key decision-making points.²

The PI program needed refining, and it required the support of the key stakeholders involved in SEQ2021. Yet, when we looked in the literature for advice on how to systematically plan – in a collaborative way – for PI, we found very little to guide us. So, based on our experiences and reading of PI materials, we developed and implemented a process that would bring the key stakeholders to the PI planning table, find agreement on the goals and objectives of the PI program, and link the PI activities to the decision-making process.

This guidebook draws from the PI planning exercise developed for SEQ2021 and presents a process that can be used at a variety of scales and applied to the range of initiatives that call for PI.

What do we mean by public involvement?

People use various terms to describe the activity of involving external stakeholders or 'the public' in the decisions or actions of government and the private and community sectors – public involvement, public participation, community consultation and community engagement are perhaps the most common.

In this guidebook we use the term 'public involvement' (referred to throughout as PI) to embrace the spectrum of methods or techniques that are used to involve stakeholders in the development or implementation of initiatives. For more explanation of the various ways we use PI see Box 1.

PI can occur at various stages of an initiative, with varying degrees of intensity and depth, for example:

- providing the public with information on an initiative so they understand it better
- gathering information from the public that can help in the actual development of an initiative
- providing the public with opportunities for active participation in the decision-making or implementation stages of an initiative.

Whatever the scale and type of initiative, PI must have a clear purpose and be designed to achieve that purpose effectively and efficiently, including a consideration of the context it is operating within.

Throughout this guidebook we use the terms 'the public' and 'the community' for ease of expression. However, there is no one 'public' or 'community'. Instead, the public and community are made up of various stakeholders.

Stakeholders might include everyone in a geographic community affected by a new initiative, or perhaps only particular groups because of their specific values or needs such as people of various cultural groups, employment areas and political interests, or those who have a special relationship or stake in certain issues or places. Stakeholders can also include people or groups representing certain organisational, business or government interests or values, rather than their own personal interests or values.

Public involvement (PI)

Public involvement refers to the range of methods or techniques used to involve the public in any aspect of decision making. It includes other terms such as community consultation, community engagement, and public participation.

Public involvement planning (PIP)

PIP is a participatory approach involving a range of stakeholders in the process of planning for PI. The initiatives that can benefit from a PIP process range from building a new freeway or designing a public space through to developing a new policy or delivering effective and efficient services to a community.

Public involvement planning (PIP) group

A PIP group guides the overall development and implementation of the PIP process. It usually includes those responsible for carrying out the PI program as well as representatives from key stakeholder groups.

Public involvement (PI) planner

The PI planner is the person who has primary responsibility for overseeing the public involvement process. The PI planner works closely with the PIP group.

Public involvement planning (PIP) workshop

PIP workshops are the key participatory mechanism for determining the purpose and approach to PI. For small initiatives the PIP workshop may simply be conducted with the PIP group, while for larger initiatives more stakeholders are involved.

Public Involvement (PI) strategy

A PI strategy is the outcome of the PIP process. It is a plan that sets out why, when and how various stakeholders will be involved in PI for a particular initiative, how the initiative will be evaluated, and what implementation will involve.

Initiative

In this guidebook an initiative is any proposal or activity that could benefit from public involvement planning, from government (national, state or local), non-government or industry policies, plans, projects or services.

Box 1: Terms used in this guidebook

Section A: Principles of public involvement planning

Guiding principles for public involvement planning (PIP)

Goal-driven public involvement planning

Participatory public involvement planning

Links to evaluation

Guiding principles for public involvement planning (PIP)

There are three guiding principles for planning a PIP process. A PIP process should be:

- goal-driven
- participatory
- linked to evaluation activities.

Following these principles will increase the likelihood that a PI program is based on a clear and shared understanding of what is to be achieved.

Goal-driven public involvement planning (PIP)

If you are planning PI as part of an initiative you need to ask a number of strategic questions:

- **What** is the decision-making, organisational, political and social context of the initiative?
- **Why** do you want to involve the public?
- **Who** should you involve from the public and **when** is it most appropriate to involve them?
- **How** should the public be involved?

This guiding principle can be thought of as being like a funnel to help sort out the most fitting technique (see Figure 1). Another way of expressing this principle is:

What + Why + Who + When = How

These questions form the cornerstone of the PIP process.

Too often planning for PI focuses only on the 'how', that is, on the methods and techniques of PI. This means that decisions about PI planning are then led by issues to do with methods – for example, a PI planner feels comfortable with traditional PI activities such as public meetings, or a decision-maker wants to try out a new type of PI such as a citizens' jury or a large visioning exercise. However, often these decisions about PI techniques are not accompanied by careful thought about whether they are appropriate to the initiative.

This can result in a mismatch between the outputs of PI and the needs of decision-makers. Furthermore, when the overall goals of PI are unspecified, those involved can have quite different understandings of the purpose of the activities. This can result in misunderstandings and even conflict, particularly about the role that the PI will play in final decisions.

Before deciding how PI will be conducted, it is critical to consider other aspects of PI, including:

- the decision-making, organisational, social and political context of the initiative
- the goals and objectives of PI in relation to the initiative
- the people that the PI should target

- the most appropriate point in the decision-making process to seek the input of these people.

By addressing these issues first it will quickly become evident which PI techniques will best suit the particular circumstances of the initiative.

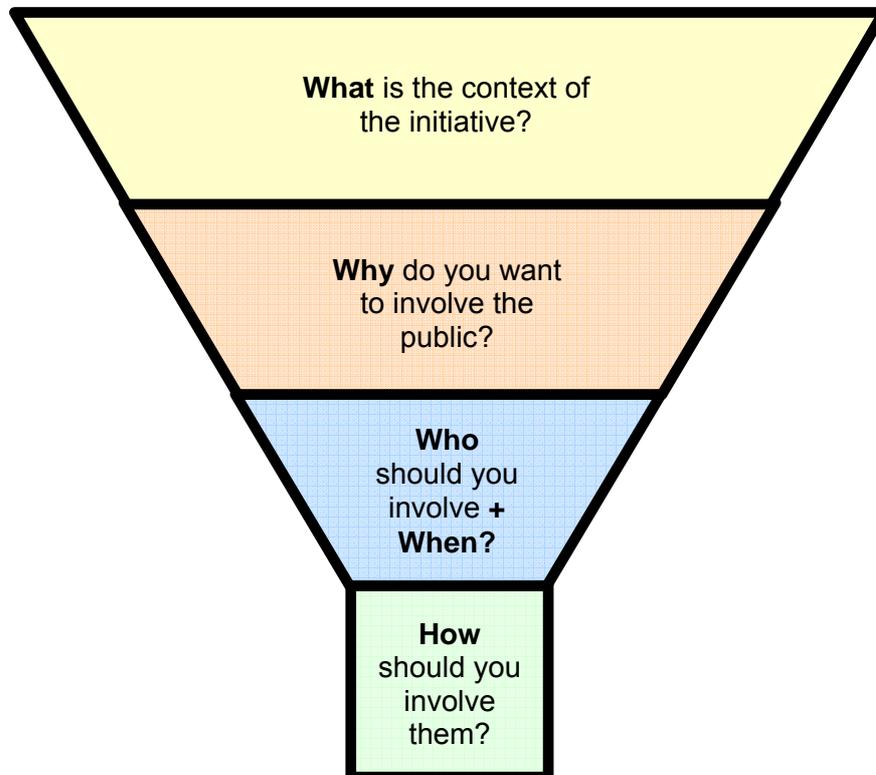


Figure 1: Strategic questions for PI

Public involvement planning (PIP)

The process of planning for public involvement can follow the same basic approach as good PI practice by involving those with a stake in the initiative in decision making about the PI strategy. It is important that internal and external stakeholders are involved in planning PI as this will ensure that the PI activities are well matched to the decision-making process for the initiative, and that external stakeholders submit their expert knowledge about the context and the PI approach that is likely to work best. This approach is also likely to build strong internal and external support for the PI strategy.

Internal and external stakeholders should be involved in two ways.

- A **PIP group** should be established to carry out planning for PI. The group should be headed by the PI planner and include key stakeholders (one or two internal and external stakeholders for small initiatives; a group of no more than ten people for very large initiatives). Relevant internal stakeholders are people who have responsibility for the various aspects of the initiative, while external stakeholders are those who might be affected by the initiative (they might be drawn from

community groups, non-government organisations, peak bodies, industry associations and government departments).

In Section B, Step 1, we discuss the PIP group in more detail.

- The PIP group should run a **PIP workshop** to determine the purpose and approach to PI. For smaller initiatives the workshop might simply involve the PIP group, but for larger initiatives a wider group of internal and external stakeholders should be involved.

In Section B, Steps 1 and 3, we provide an overview of the PIP workshop; and in Section C we give a detailed run-through of a PIP workshop. Experienced practitioners will be able to adapt the material in Section C to suit their existing practice; while less experienced practitioners will find it provides an easy-to-follow guide for running a PIP workshop.

Links to evaluation

Increasingly, it is important to evaluate PI strategies. Rather than treating evaluation as an afterthought, we believe that the evaluation approach should be considered as part of the initial planning of PI. This is a way of ensuring that evaluation provides useful information about the process and outcome of the PI strategy, and that the evaluation is closely linked to the goals and objectives of the PI strategy.

In Section B, Step 4, we provide more details on how to plan the evaluation of your PI strategy.

Section B:

Steps in public involvement planning

The five steps

Step 1. Decide who to involve in public involvement planning (PIP) process

How should stakeholders be involved?

Step 2. Undertake background research

The decision-making context

The organisational context

The social and political context

Step 3. Conduct a PIP workshop to decide the purpose and approach to public involvement

What is a PIP workshop?

Why involve the public?

Who to involve, and when?

How to involve the public?

Step 4. Decide evaluation approach

Was the PI strategy successful?

What can we do better?

Step 5. Prepare the public involvement strategy

The five steps

There are five steps to the public involvement planning (PIP) process (see Figure 2).

Step 1. Decide who to involve in the PIP process

The participatory approach to PIP involves setting up a working group to develop the PI strategy—we have called this the public involvement planning (PIP) group. This group should include a small number of key internal and external stakeholders.

Step 2. Undertake background research

Information about the decision-making, organisational, social and political context of the initiative is important for selecting the right PI technique. These issues can be researched concurrently with preparations under Step 1.

Step 3. Conduct a PIP workshop to decide the purpose and approach to PI

This step addresses the goals and objectives for PI, the groups to be targeted, when in the decision-making process their input is best sought, and how it will be sought. Decisions about these issues are best made through a PIP workshop. In smaller initiatives the workshop might be conducted with all members of the PIP group, while for larger initiatives other stakeholders should participate in the workshop.

Step 4. Decide on the evaluation approach

The evaluation approach needs to fit with the PI strategy so that the success or otherwise of the PI program can be assessed and lessons learned for future PI activities.

Step 5. Prepare the PI strategy

The plan for PI is based on the decisions made in Steps 3 and 4, and includes information about timeframe, resources and responsibilities.

The amount of time each step takes and the number of people involved will depend on the scale of the initiative and on the degree of experience of the lead organisation and PIP group members. The overall responsibility for these steps should be given to an experienced PI officer (if available) or to an experienced project manager—we refer to this person as the public involvement (PI) planner. The PI planner may carry out these responsibilities alone or, in the case of larger projects, through a team of staff.

We now go through the five steps in more detail.

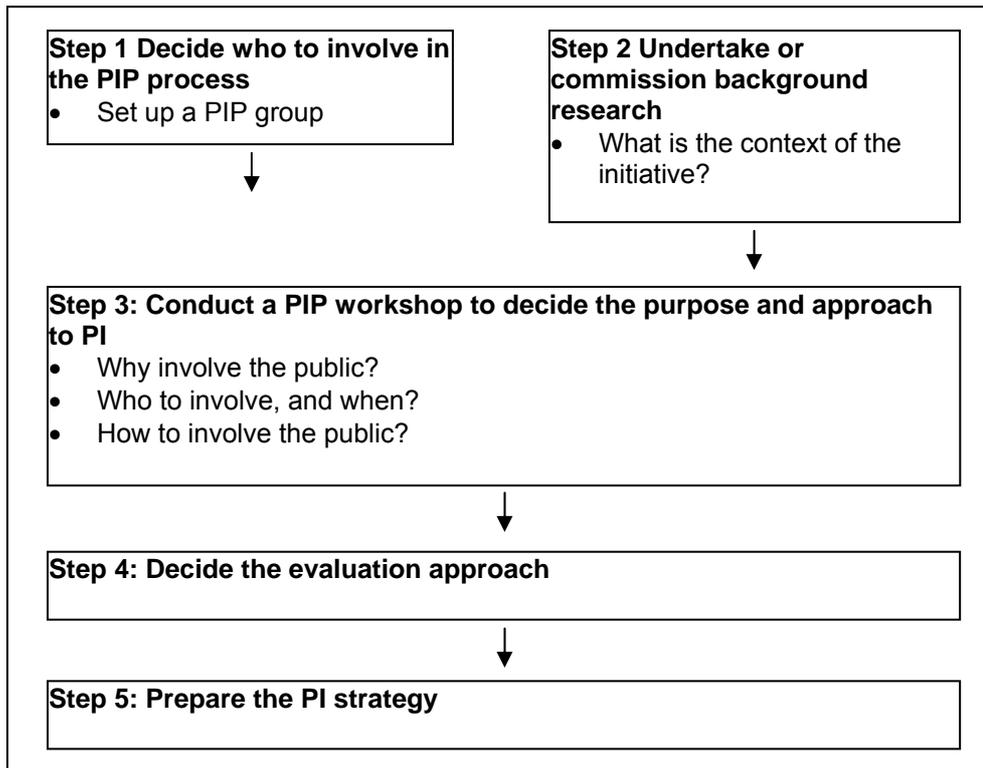


Figure 2: Steps in the PIP process

Step 1. Decide who to involve in the PIP process

In order to ensure effective and meaningful PI it is important to involve a representative range of people in the process of planning PI.

There are many different views about the purpose and conduct of PI. By taking a participatory approach in the PIP process and involving both internal and external stakeholders you can discuss and debate various expectations and views of public involvement, and take early action to reach agreement. This can ensure that the PI strategy is developed on the basis of shared understandings, and that internal and external stakeholders will support the PI activities.

Internal stakeholders involved in the decisions and/or implementation of the initiative are vital. The more they participate in and are supportive of the PI strategy, the more likely that the outcomes of PI will inform the development of the initiative.

The US Department of Energy suggests drawing from the following list of internal stakeholders:³

- those with responsibility for decisions
- those who understand the links with other areas (for example, senior managers)
- those who will be affected by the decision or expected to implement it
- those who will have to assist with or implement the public involvement program (such as media officers and facilitators).

It is also important to involve **external stakeholders** such as:

- members of key non-government organisations and groups (for example, industry and community groups, community organisations, peak bodies), people regarded as community leaders and/or people who might represent various sets of stakeholders (such as local politicians)
- government agencies and local councils.

Yosie and Herbst define external stakeholders as belonging to one of four groups—those who are:⁴

- directly affected by a proposal
- interested in the proposal and likely to want to become involved
- have a general interest in the proposal and want to seek information
- affected by a proposal but are unaware of or unlikely to participate in a PI process.

When planning PI it is most important to involve the first two groups. However, general community leaders may also be invited to provide representation on behalf of the latter two groups. Information on the initiative should be made readily available to **all** stakeholders.

External stakeholders, along with internal stakeholders, can provide invaluable advice on:

- other relevant activities or issues that might affect the outcomes of public involvement or constrain the decision-making processes involved in your initiative
- possible levels of interest in the initiative within the community
- key interested parties or leaders in the community
- channels of communication that will work best
- the history of relationships within the community and between the community and your organisation
- the sorts of activities that would be well-received.

How should stakeholders be involved?

In the PIP process stakeholders are involved in the planning process at two levels.

The first is via a small, representative group of key stakeholders who are intensively involved in overseeing the four steps of the PIP process—the PIP group. Involvement at this level can require a large commitment of time and therefore the PIP group usually consists of a small number of people.

The second way internal and external stakeholders can be involved is through participation in a PIP workshop. We discuss each of these below.

Public involvement planning (PIP) groups

The number of members in the PIP group will depend on the scale and significance of the initiative, and therefore the likely complexity of the PI process. When the initiative is small and/or has relatively minor effects, three or four people may be all that is needed: the public involvement planner, a key internal stakeholder and one or two important external stakeholders. When the initiative involves potentially significant effects for a wider group of stakeholders, more people should be involved, although it is important that the group does not become too large and unwieldy. There should probably be no more than ten members.

Internal stakeholders should be fairly easy to identify; in general, these will be people who have a significant influence on the decisions about the initiative or how it will be implemented.

Selecting external stakeholders will probably require some background research on the community involved to identify key community organisations/leaders and any relevant government agencies or local councils that will be affected by the initiative. It is important to try to gain some ‘insider’ knowledge on groups and individuals who are likely to make a worthwhile contribution and who will be able to gain support from the local community. Community development workers, social planners and community centres can often provide these kinds of insights. It is also worth reading local newspapers or the newsletters of different groups to get a feel for the community.

You should consider whether external participants should be compensated for their time. As a minimum, make sure that meetings are held at a convenient time and that meals and travel expenses are covered.

Once the members of the PIP group have been selected and have agreed to participate, the PI planner should:

- organise the first meeting and draw up a draft terms of reference
- hold the first meeting of the PIP group which should include agreeing the terms of reference and discussing the overall approach to the PIP process, including whether or not to hold a PIP workshop
- develop, if appropriate, an outline for the PIP workshop with the whole group or a smaller working group of PIP members.

Public involvement planning (PIP) workshops

The PIP workshop is a collaborative exercise in which internal and external stakeholders decide on the purpose and approach for PI. In our experience the workshop is an essential part of the PIP process as it adds to the quality of the PI strategy, and generates commitment and support for the PI activities.

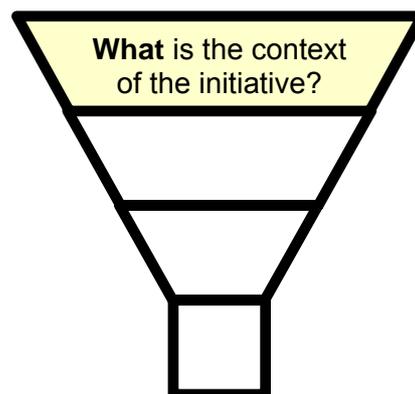
For small and straightforward initiatives the workshop might involve only the members of the PIP group. However, for larger and more complex initiatives it is important that a wider range of internal and external stakeholders participate. External stakeholders might be drawn from relevant government agencies, non-government organisations, peak bodies, business groups and academic institutions. Depending on the scale and complexity of the initiative and the PI exercise, participants might range in number from six to sixty, and the duration of the workshop might be from a half day to two days (also see Step 3 in this section and Section C for how to run a PIP workshop).

Step 2. Undertake background research

Prior to, or at the same time as Step 1, the PI planner should begin the process of researching the context of the initiative. This includes collating existing information and gathering new information on:

- the parameters of the decision-making context
- the organisational context
- the social and political context of the communities and stakeholders affected by or interested in the initiative.

This step in the process is concerned with clarifying **what** the public is being invited to be involved in. Understanding the context of the initiative will help to determine realistic goals and objectives and to select the most appropriate method:



What + Why + Who + When = How

This step results in a background report which is used in subsequent stages. We explain each aspect of the context in more detail below.

The decision-making context

It is essential to know how the decision-making process for the initiative will proceed. There are a number of factors to consider (see Box 2).

Questions to ask when assessing the decision-making context

What are the stages in developing, implementing or monitoring the initiative?

- What is the timeline of the decision-making process?

How will decisions be made?

- Who will make the decisions?
- What is the process for making decisions?
- What information will be used to make each decision?
- What are other potential internal or external factors that may affect the decision?

Box 2: Assessing the decision-making context

A first step is to outline the various stages in the decision-making process. This will depend on the type of initiative—Box 3 highlights some sample stages for developing, implementing and monitoring or evaluating initiatives.

You will also need to spell out the timeline for each stage in the process. Well-run PI activities generally take time to plan, organise, conduct and analyse. There is, for example, no point conducting a widespread public involvement campaign to gather comprehensive information when there is not enough time to plan the campaign and/or analyse and incorporate the information that is

generated. A diagram of stages and timelines will help determine the scale of public involvement that will be appropriate.

<p>Decision-making steps to develop an initiative might include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• assess the current situation and identifying any problems or issues• identify priority issues• research current status of priority issues (Where are we now?)• research trends related to priority issues (Where are we headed?)• identify aims and objectives (What is our vision for the future? Where do we want to be? What is our desired outcome?)• identify alternative strategies and actions for achieving our aims and objectives (How are we going to get to where we want to be?)• choose criteria to evaluate the strategies and actions• evaluate and then decide on strategies and actions <p>Decision-making steps to implement or deliver an initiative might include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• assess implementation/delivery responsibilities and financial impacts• assess implementation risks and opportunities• establish processes for implementation/delivery <p>Decision-making steps to monitor or evaluate an initiative might include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• decide what to monitor or evaluate• decide on performance indicators (How will we know how well things are progressing?)
--

Box 3: Sample stages for decision-making process

Understanding how the decision-making process will proceed is also important. Some different forms of decision making include:

- politically-driven decision making
- information-driven decision making
- conflict-driven/adversarial decision making
- a consensus process
- delegated authority (to community).

Constraints on the decision-making processes should also be clarified. For example, sometimes organisational (such as business or organisational policies or plans) or legislative constraints (such as legislatively prescribed procedures) might affect how decisions are made or how implementation proceeds. These factors might influence things related to:

- the necessary stages or processes to use
- the timeframe of stages
- the process used to arrive at decisions (including what information can and cannot be considered)
- who has the authority to make decisions.

The US Department of Energy identifies two common organisational or legislative constraints that may affect decision making:⁵

- there is already a commitment to a particular outcome or decision (in which case public involvement is probably unnecessary)
- there are constraints on the release of information.

The organisational context

The organisational context is important for knowing more about the 'fit' between the organisation and the PI strategy (see Box 4). For example, it is important to know whether staff have the time to plan, conduct and analyse the results of PI activities. It is also important to identify the skills of staff, whether it will be necessary to employ other skilled people, and the type of expertise that may be needed to supplement the skills of staff. Knowing more about staff expertise can also help determine whether, in the longer term, staff training might be more strategic than employing experts for each PI exercise.

Questions to ask when assessing the organisational context

- What are the organisational resources that can be harnessed: staff (time), expertise and money?
- What are staff attitudes to and experiences with PI?
- What is the organisational history of public involvement?
- What relationships already exist within the organisation, and between members of the organisation and affected and interested stakeholders?
- What are the procedures and processes used within the organisation that might affect the approval and implementation of PI activities, including the time it takes to gain approval?

Box 4: Assessing the organisational context

It is also essential to know how much money is available to employ other skilled personnel, train existing staff and buy the multitude of items that are needed for public involvement activities: advertising, printing, hiring venues, providing childcare and refreshments and so on. Obviously there is no point planning for a comprehensive PI strategy when there is limited funding, expertise and staff time.

Some of the required information about the decision-making and organisational context will be already known to the PI planner and other members of the PIP group, but some information may need to come from other staff and senior managers.

The social and political context

Next, it is important to understand the wider social and political context of the initiative. This information will help you understand which PI involvement methods or techniques might be appropriate (see Box 5).

Some characteristics are likely to remain relatively stable (such as socioeconomic status), while others are more dynamic and may change quickly. For example, a proposal by another organisation for a controversial project may quickly change attitudes in a community.

It is also important to investigate past and existing relationships your organisation has with different stakeholder groups or individuals and any events or experiences that have influenced these relations. In particular, this would need to include any past or current public involvement experiences

(remember that many people will not differentiate between the activities of your particular government department, level of government or private company and other departments or companies).

Questions to ask when assessing the social and political context

Which specific individuals, organisations or businesses will be directly affected by the initiative, to what degree will they be affected, and what is the 'nature' of the effect – is it positive or negative?

Who else might be interested in the initiative?

What are the basic demographic characteristics of the stakeholders affected by the initiative, for example, socioeconomic status, age distribution, cultural diversity, value sets (such as political and religious values)?

Which groups of stakeholders might be harder to reach, such as people of different cultures, traditionally under-represented or excluded groups or people of special needs?

What important networks, groups and organisations (including, churches, schools, and community and cultural groups or centres) do stakeholders belong to, how often do they meet, what is their upcoming meeting schedule and how do they communicate with their members or constituents (for example, through newsletters)?

What other communication channels can be used to reach stakeholders, such as print media, radio, television, and festivals?

What are the geographic boundaries of the affected stakeholders?

What previous experiences of PI have there been? Have these experiences been positive or negative?

Box 5: Assessing the social and political context

Investigating past events or experiences will put you in a better position to anticipate:

- the stakeholders who are likely to be interested in or most directly affected by the decisions
- the probable attitudes to public involvement among stakeholders and how any public involvement activities might be received
- the probable attitudes to the initiative and issues that will be of concern
- the type of knowledge or experiences of stakeholders that might be useful to tap into.

This information may also be valuable for anticipating the degree of controversy you might encounter in public involvement activities. But it is worth bearing in mind the caution from the US Department of Energy that it is always difficult to predict the level of controversy: 'something that seems like it should be highly controversial may not generate much interest, while something that seems quite bland may become a battleground'.⁶ Nevertheless, it identifies some useful indicators for predicting the degree of controversy:

- if there has been controversy on similar decisions in the past
- if the decision to be made can be linked to another ongoing controversy
- if there is a current debate in the community that links to the decision to be made

- if there are interest groups in the community concerned entirely with the decision to be made.

Trying to predict the potential level of controversy is important for two reasons. First, if the initiative is likely to be controversial then this has the potential to create stress for your organisation. Second, if there are highly organised interest groups actively campaigning for a particular position, they may spread false information that can undermine your PI efforts and can drown out other potential participants. This may require using, as part of the repertoire of PI techniques, methods that select a sample of participants, for example, telephone surveys for simple information gathering or citizens' juries for more interactive and in-depth involvement.

Much of the required information about the community's social and political context will be available from your organisation's own documents, or from related organisations or sources like the Australian Bureau of Statistics Census.

Some information will need to come from people who are familiar with the affected community, including key community informants. This may require some rapid appraisal community research.⁷ However, for highly controversial initiatives it is important not to create misinformed panic by leaking ideas about an initiative and raising concern before a full communication strategy is available to provide the community with complete and accurate information about the proposal.

Finally, all the data you have gathered should be written up in a background report (see Box 6 for an example structure). Care should be taken with any information that includes value statements or statements of opinion. For example, the statement 'this community has negative attitudes to this type of initiative because they don't want it in their backyard', could be rephrased as 'there is the potential for negative reactions to the location of the activity based on information provided by key community stakeholders. Some of the concerns noted by these stakeholders include the effect of the development on residential values'.

1. The decision-making context of the initiative

Overview of the decision-making context

The decision-making process, including:

- the different stages and timeline (including diagram/flow chart)
- the information required to progress each stage
- the type of decision-making process for each stage and those involved
- potential internal or external factors that may affect the decision

2. The organisational context of the initiative

The organisational characteristics

The available resources for public involvement, including:

- staff time
- expertise
- money

3. The social and political context

Communities affected by the decision, and their characteristics

Geographic boundaries or concentrations of affected communities

Other potentially interested individuals or organisations

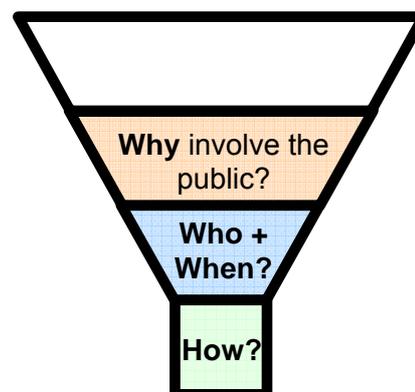
Networks and communication patterns and opportunities

Past or current events and experiences that might affect public involvement in the activity, including public involvement experiences

Box 6: Sample structure for a background report

Step 3. Conduct a public involvement planning (PIP) workshop

After the background research has been conducted and the PIP group understands the context of the initiative and the various stages of the decision-making process, the next step is to consider the other important sets of information:



What + **Why** + **Who** + **When** = **How**

Table 1 gives an overview of key questions to be considered, and we expand on these in the sub-sections below.

	Content	Examples
<i>Why?</i> +	What are the overall goals and objectives for public involvement?	To improve relationships To design an initiative which reflects local conditions and needs
<i>Who?</i> +	Who do we want to involve from the public (who is our target 'audience')?	Communities of locale or communities of interest
	How will these target audiences be represented or recruited?	Through self-identification, contacting representative groups or sampling
<i>When?</i>	How can the different objectives for PI be best addressed at different stages in the decision-making process?	To identify problems or issues at the outset To decide on performance indicators to assess how well the project is being implemented
= <i>How?</i>	Various public involvement methods and techniques	Public meetings, discussion documents, visioning exercises

Table 1: Determining the purpose and approach

What is a PIP workshop?

Decisions about what, why, who, when and how can be made unilaterally by the PI planner. However, our experience is that the final PI strategy will be more effective and successful if these decisions are the focus of a participatory workshop.

The PIP workshop involves taking stakeholders through the ideas presented in this section, and getting them to brainstorm and discuss their ideas about why, who, when and how (as discussed in this section). Not only will this generate useful material for the PI planner and PIP group, but it will also build commitment from stakeholders to the PI exercise.

The ideas and information generated at the workshop can then be used by the PI planner and the PIP group to prepare the final PI strategy (Step 5).

A sample agenda for a PIP workshop is outlined in Box 7. In Section C we provide a detailed ‘run-through’ of a PIP workshop. Experienced practitioners might adapt the material in Section C to match what they currently do, while less experienced practitioners will find it useful as a step-by-step guide for running a PIP workshop.

Sample agenda for a PIP workshop

1. Introduce the workshop
2. Introduce the PIP process
 - Use material from the Introduction and Section A of this guidebook
3. Present background information about the decision-making and organisational context and the social and political context
 - Use the background report from Step 2
4. Develop an overall vision for PI
 - Use material about goals, objectives and principles from Step 3
5. Develop a PI framework
 - Use material about why, who and when from Step 4
6. Brainstorm PI techniques and methods that match the PI vision and framework
 - Use material about how (see later in this section and also Resources)
7. Summary and feedback

Box 7: Sample agenda for a PIP workshop

Why involve the public?

The first question to address is ‘why involve the public’? This starts with determining an overarching set of **goals**, **objectives** and **principles** for the public involvement program—one way of doing this could be through a process of ‘visioning’ to determine what the outcomes of the public involvement program will look like.

It is important to distinguish between goals of PI, which are broad statements of intent, and PI objectives, which turn the goals into more specific statements (see Box 8). Objectives generally fall into four types:

- education (or information out)
- data gathering (or information in)
- participation in decision making
- relationship and community building.

Most PI strategies will contain a mix of these objectives.

Goals are broad statements of what is to be achieved, for example:

- to make better decisions based on information from the public
- to increase legitimacy/credibility of the process
- to generate public confidence in decisions
- to resolve conflict
- to establish a community mandate
- to help build long-term cooperative relationships between the community and government
- to promote community initiative and ownership of issues
- to develop social capital and strengthen community networks
- to develop trust and establish dialogue

Objectives for public involvement are more specific than the overall goals and generally relate to:

1. Educating or informing the public about, for example:

- the decision-making process
- the issues
- its role in the decision-making process
- how it might be affected by the decision/s
- alternatives and trade-offs
- any decisions and the rationale for them

2. Gathering information about, for example:

- community values
- local conditions (local knowledge)
- community concerns and issues
- options and alternatives
- preferred options

3. Participation in decision-making, for example:

- participants decide priorities
- participants evaluate alternatives

4. Relationship and community-building, for example:

- improving stakeholders' understandings of the issues facing the community
- building stronger relationships between the community and government
- bringing together members of diverse community and business groups

Box 8: Examples of goals and objectives for PI

It is important to translate broad goals into more specific and tangible objectives. For example, consider the following goal:

To gather information from the public that can be used to make better land use decisions.

This could be translated into the more specific objective:

To gather information about public values that can be used to evaluate options for site development.

An even more specific objective would be:

Residents within 5km of the site will prioritise criteria for assessing development options.

Sometimes principles about good PI practice get confused with goals and objectives. Examples of principles include:

- ensure that participation is accessible
- invite people whose voices are not usually heard
- treat those who participate respectfully
- provide feedback to participants so that they know how their input has been used.

The PI strategy should provide a statement of the principles that underpin the approach and these should inform the whole process.

Who to involve and when?

After you have determined the overall goals, objectives and principles you will need to prepare more specific objectives for each stage (**when**) in the decision-making process. You can take these stages directly from the background research conducted in Step 2, which will be summarised in the background report. The specific objectives need to also address **who** will be involved at the different decision-making stages (see Box 9 for examples).

Sample stages in a decision-making process	Example objectives for public involvement
Identify problems or issues	To have clients identify problems they encounter with the current service delivery approach
Identify priority issues	To have local residents rank their top three issues from all the issues identified
Gather data on current status of priority issues (Where are we now?)	To have community sector organisations outline their perspectives on the current status of priority issues
Gather data on trends related to priority issues (Where are we headed?)	To engage an expert panel to identify likely trends
Identify aims and objectives (What is our vision for the future? Where do we want to be? What is our desired outcome?)	To have clients identify their vision of an ideal service
Identify alternative strategies and actions for achieving our aims and objectives (How are we going to get to where we want to be?)	To have community groups, business organisations and government workers collaborate to come up with various strategies and actions
Choose criteria to evaluate the strategies and actions	To have local residents identify the top three criteria for evaluating the proposed strategies and actions
Evaluate the strategies and actions	To have key internal stakeholders evaluate the strategies and actions against the selected criteria
Decide on the strategies and actions	To have a community reference panel make the final decision on strategies and actions
Decide on performance indicators (How will we know how well things are progressing?)	To have an expert panel and key internal stakeholders determine indicators to measure performance

Box 9: Examples of objectives for different stages in the decision-making process

In thinking about **who** to include in the public involvement exercise there are a range of options, only some of which will be relevant to your initiative (see Box 10 for examples of different target communities).

Possible target communities

People living in a certain geographic location

People who are potentially affected by an initiative

People who have a certain interest (for example, car owners or home owners)

People who share a common value set (such as environmentalists)

People with a shared cultural or religious background

User-groups (for example, service users, people who use recreation areas)

Marginalised or excluded groups (for example, long-term unemployed people)

People from a certain demographic group (such as parents of pre-school age children, 65 yrs +)

People of non-English speaking background

People with particular expertise (for example, ecologists)

Representatives of businesses or non-government organisations (including peak bodies)

Box 10: Examples of different target communities

Another consideration is who from the target communities will be involved in PI. Is your intention to involve everyone? Or are you only interested in targeting selected members of the community? The options for who might be involved include:

- everyone
- those who respond to an open invitation (and who therefore become a self-selected group)
- relevant interested groups or affected parties
- people who represent a sample of the community such as
 - geographic
 - demographic
 - cultural
 - random (statistically representative)
 - interest (such as peak bodies).

These decisions about who to involve will not only be affected by the type of initiative but also the information about the context that you collected as part of Step 2 of the PIP process. The target community needs to be realistic for the decision-making context, the organisational context (especially the budget that is available, and the skills of staff), and the social and political context.

At this point in the process it should be possible to draw up a table that summarises views so far about:

- **when** in the decision-making process PI will occur
- **why** it will be undertaken at this stage (that is, the role it will play)
- **who** the target community is and strategies for identifying and recruiting members.

Table 2 sets out some examples of what this might look like in practice.

Stage in the decision-making process	Objectives	Target community	Strategies for selecting/recruiting members
When	Why	Who	
Identify priority Issues	To have all users of the service identify their top three issues	All users of the service from across the state	Mail-out to all users of the service
Identify options	To have people from the groups most affected collaborate to devise options	Representatives from affected groups	Written invitation (followed up by telephone calls) to target groups asking them to nominate a representative
Prioritise options	To have people in the affected area identify their preferred option	All residents across the suburb, and especially those within a 1km radius of the development	a) Advertising in local newspaper b) letter-box drop to people within a 1km radius

Table 2: Examples of the when, why and who elements of PI

How to involve the public?

It is only after you have considered the purpose of PI, when it fits into the decision-making process and who should be involved that you can then identify appropriate PI techniques.

There are a multitude of techniques that you can draw on, but by honing your thinking about the PI strategy you are in a good position to be able to select techniques that will most benefit your decision-making process and outcome.

In selecting PI techniques there are two trade-offs that are worth bearing in mind. First, there is usually a trade-off between the quantity of people involved and the quality or depth of discussion. In other words, when a large number of people are involved it is usually only possible for participants to participate in fairly limited ways, such as ranking options or voting on the preferred option. A smaller group can usually work more intensively on issues, develop a more complex understanding and potentially even reach a consensus.

Second, more creative forms of involvement based on a 'blank sheet' can be exciting for participants but also time consuming to organise and run, particularly as it is sometimes necessary for participants to develop a shared knowledge base. More reactive forms of involvement are generally easier to organise and less time consuming, but provide participants with only limited choices and limited data to work with. Reactive forms can also generate negative reactions, with participants feeling they are unduly constrained.

There are many excellent resources that detail the enormous range of PI techniques that are appropriate to any type and scale of initiative. These resources often categorise methods in terms of the role of participants in the decision-making process. For example, the Citizens and Civics Unit at the

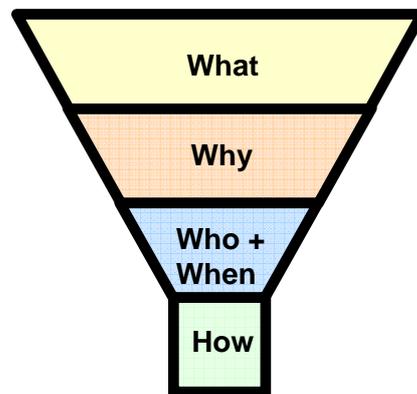
Western Australia Department of the Premier and Cabinet, categorise methods according to those that:⁸

- inform/educate
- gather information
- discuss/involve
- engage
- partner.

In the Resources section of this guidebook you will find a selection of materials that lay out different methods for PI. When selecting from these we urge you to keep two simple things in mind:

What + Why + Who + When = How

and



Step 4. Decide on the evaluation approach

One of the guiding principles of the PIP process that underpins this guidebook is that evaluation activities should be addressed in the planning phase. This is to ensure that evaluation is an integral part of the PI strategy and not 'added on' as an afterthought. Considering evaluation in the PIP stage is also a way of testing the strategy and of making sure that it is setting out to achieve what you want it to achieve.⁹

In what follows we provide an overview of an evaluation approach.¹⁰ Overall evaluation should be geared towards answering two key questions:

- Was the PI strategy successful?
- What can we do better? (or what have we learned?)

Was the public involvement strategy successful?

This question is concerned with the PI strategy's effectiveness, and is particularly useful for reporting purposes at the end of an initiative.

There are three aspects of a strategy's success (or otherwise) that can be evaluated:

- the extent to which the **objectives** were achieved
- whether the **principles** of PI were practised
- the **impact** of PI on decisions about the initiative.

In order to assess these aspects of PI, you need to decide on evaluation criteria and methods.

Evaluation criteria for objectives should be derived from the 'why', 'who', 'when' and 'how' decisions covered in Step 3. Table 3 gives examples of evaluation criteria to assess whether specific objectives were achieved.

Objectives	Target community	Recruitment strategies	Evaluation criteria
To have all users of the service identify their top three issues	All users of the service from across the state	Mail-out to all users of the service	All users had the opportunity to identify issues; no less than 25% of users from across the state responded
To have people from the groups most affected collaborate to devise options	Representatives from affected groups	Written invitation (followed up by telephone calls) to target groups asking them to nominate a representative	Written and telephone invitations were issued to all affected groups and representatives from at least ten affected groups attended—a range of groups were represented and participants cooperated in the process of devising options
To have people in the affected area identify their preferred option	All residents across the suburb, and especially those within a 1km radius of the development	a) Advertising in local newspaper b) letter-box drop to people within a 1km radius	Newspaper and letterbox ads were issued; more than fifty people attended and at least half were from within a 1km radius of the initiative; the gender and age of attendees were evenly distributed.

Table 3: Examples of evaluation criteria matched to objectives

You should also evaluate your PI principles (such as making activities accessible and respectful). We have included some examples of evaluation criteria in Box 11.

<p>Respect for participants Were participants' views listened to? Were participants' views accurately recorded? (that is, were participants' own words used?) Were participants' questions and concerns respectfully responded to? Was there sufficient time for participants to contribute? Were the PI activities comfortable and enjoyable for participants?</p> <p>Accessibility of PI activities Were the PI activities run at a time and place that matched the target community?</p> <p>Quality of information and resources provided to participants Was the information complete and easy to understand? Was the information appropriate to the target audience? Was the information provided in a timely manner? Did the information raise interest in the initiative?</p> <p>Transparency Were participants informed about how the outcomes of PI activities would be used in the decision-making process? Were the objectives of the PI activities made clear to participants?</p>
--

Box 11: Examples of evaluation criteria related to principles of PI practice

Evaluation criteria also need to address the impact of the PI strategy, that is, the ways in which the outcomes of PI activities shaped decisions about the initiative. These criteria might include:

- Did the PI activity produce information that was useful?

- If the information was not useful, why not?
- Was the information generated used in the decision-making process?
- If so, in what ways did it help to shape decisions?
- If it was not used, why not?

Paul Greening suggests some useful additional impact criteria:¹¹

- What were the balances of influence between PI and the other decision-making mechanisms and factors?
- What aspects of the policy or service changed as a result of PI?
- Was the influence direct or subtle?
- Were new ideas pursued as a result of PI?
- Were any organisational changes made as a result of PI?

The methods used to assess the evaluation criteria will vary but need to be matched to the criteria. Some common methods for collecting quantitative and qualitative information from participants (and others, such as internal stakeholders) include:

- participant surveys
- interviews
- focus groups
- observation
- document analysis.

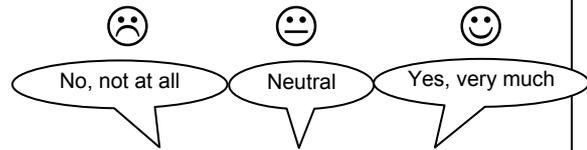
Johnson provides more information on using these methods for evaluation purposes.¹²

It is also worth considering whether the information is collected in the short, medium or long term. For example, it is probably best to collect information from participants in the short term (particularly at the end of a public involvement activity, like a workshop), but to fully understand the impact of public involvement on an initiative, observations of internal stakeholders at work might be more appropriate in the medium or long term.

The evaluation for the public involvement in SEQ2021 used a participant survey based on a Likert scale. The first section sought to establish whether the objectives of holding the public forum were achieved (Box 12). The second section tried to establish whether the principles of good PI practice were followed in the public forums (Box 13). The third section collected basic demographic information so that the PI planners could find out more about the characteristics of participants and whether the target communities were involved (Box 14).

The objectives of the forum

Please circle on the scale below



Do you feel you know more about the SEQ2021 project in general?

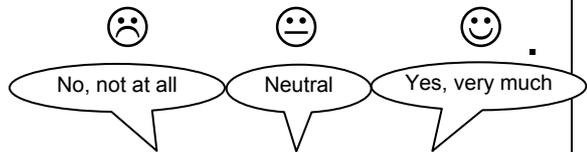
1.....2.....3.....4.....5

Do you feel you know more about the challenges facing the SEQ region?

1.....2.....3.....4.....5

Do you feel you had sufficient opportunity to provide input into this phase of SEQ2021?

1.....2.....3.....4.....5



Would you come along to future events like this about the SEQ2021 project?

1..... 2..... 3

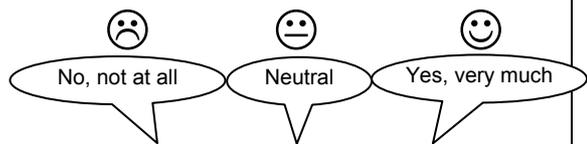
Having attended the forum, are you encouraged to provide feedback to SEQ2021 through other avenues, like written submissions?

1..... 2..... 3

Box 12: Participant survey to establish whether participants perceived that the objectives were achieved

About the forum

Please circle on the scale below



Was the location of the forum convenient?

1.....2.....3.....4.....5

Was the time of forum convenient?

1.....2.....3.....4.....5

Was the aim of the forum made clear?

1.....2.....3.....4.....5

Was there a balance between presentation of information and workshop activities?

1.....2.....3.....4.....5

Did you have adequate opportunity to provide input in the workshop activities?

1.....2.....3.....4.....5

Do you feel your comments were listened to and recorded?

1.....2.....3.....4.....5

Box 13: Participant survey to establish whether participants perceived that principles of PI were followed

About you

This information is to help us understand more about the people who attended today's forum.

Your age (Please tick)

<input type="checkbox"/>	<25
<input type="checkbox"/>	25 - 39
<input type="checkbox"/>	40 - 64
<input type="checkbox"/>	65 - 80
<input type="checkbox"/>	>80

Your employment status (Please tick)

<input type="checkbox"/>	Full-time
<input type="checkbox"/>	Part-time
<input type="checkbox"/>	Unemployed
<input type="checkbox"/>	Retired
<input type="checkbox"/>	Student
<input type="checkbox"/>	Homemaker
<input type="checkbox"/>	Other

Your sex (Please tick)

<input type="checkbox"/>	Male
<input type="checkbox"/>	Female

What is the postcode where you live

(for demographic purposes only)

<input type="text"/>				
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Box 14: Participant survey to collect basic demographic information

What can we do better?

Evaluation should also be used to identify what worked well and not so well, and therefore provide information about what could be done differently (or repeated) next time. This evaluation focus is particularly pertinent when there are a number of PI 'rounds' and the earlier rounds can be used to refine subsequent ones. However, organisations and governments are likely to run PI programs in the future, so even one-off events should be evaluated with an eye to what could be done differently in the future.

This evaluation will be done largely by reflecting on and interpreting the results of the evaluation above (that is, the evaluation of whether the PI strategy was successful). If aspects of the strategy were successful, then is it useful to reflect on what the contributing factors might have been. Likewise, it is important to know what factors might have undermined the success of the strategy.

Reflecting on what might be done better will involve thinking about the aspects of PI discussed so far in this guidebook, including the PI plan and the context of PI. Examples of questions to help reflect on what can be done better are listed in Box 15.

The PI plan

Were the objectives realistic?

Was the timing of PI appropriate to the decision-making process?

Were the right stakeholders and communities targeted?

Did the PI techniques match the target communities?

Was the implementation plan sound?

What aspects of the PI plan should have been different?

Implementation of the PI plan

Did the implementation proceed as planned or was it impeded in some way?

What aspects of the plan seemed to work well, what aspects worked not so well?

Organisational context

Was the budget realistic?

Was the amount of time to prepare, run and analyse the results of PI realistic?

What skills were lacking?

What skills did we discover?

Do we need to use specialists or should we train staff?

Did the specialists do what was expected? (If not, why not?)

Decision-making context

Did the PI strategy contribute to the decision-making process?

If not, what could have been done so that PI did make a positive contribution?

Box 15: Examples of questions to help determine what could be done better¹³

Step 5. Prepare the public involvement strategy

In the final step you need to bring together all the material generated in Steps 2, 3 and 4 to form the PI strategy. The strategy should detail:

- an overview of the context of the initiative
- the public involvement vision (based on overall goals, objectives and principles)
- the public involvement activities (based on what, why, who, when and how)
- the evaluation approach
- details of implementation including timeframe, resources and responsibilities.

A draft strategy should be circulated to participants from the PIP workshop and other key stakeholders (such as senior managers) for comment.

Box 16 provides a sample structure for a PI strategy.

Section 1. Introduction

Overview of the context of the initiative:*

- description of the initiative, including the decisions to be made (and any limitations on decision-making), the organisational context, and timeline of the initiative
- description of the social and political context, including a community profile
- analysis of any issues, opportunities and challenges for PI
- any assumptions that have been made

**This material should be taken directly from the background information prepared in Step 2 with any additions based on discussions in Step 3.*

Section 2. The public involvement vision

Overall goal for the PI strategy

Overall objectives for the PI strategy

Principles for conducting the PI strategy

Section 3. The public involvement activities

Specific objectives for each step in the decision-making process, including:

- the target community for each objective (detailed lists of target participants should be provided in an appendix)
- strategies for recruiting the target community
- information that will be provided to the target community, and how and when it will be provided
- information that will be collected, and how and when it will be collected
- public involvement activities that will occur and when (details of how activities will be conducted, by whom and where can be provided in an appendix)
- how the information received from target communities will be used and by whom (details of how the information will be analysed can be included in an appendix)
- how the outcomes of PI activities and resulting decisions will be conveyed to those who have participated in PI activities and to the target audience generally

Section 4. Evaluation approach

Details of how the PI strategy will be evaluated

Section 5. Implementation plan

Implementation of the PI strategy, including:

- actions to be completed and who will be responsible for each
- timeframes and deadlines
- resources required, and from which budgets

Box 16: Sample structure of a PI strategy

Section C: Public involvement planning (PIP) workshops

Introduction

How to prepare for a PIP workshop

- Decide how the workshop should be conducted
- Prepare information for the workshop
- Organise facilitators and presenters

Running a PIP workshop

- Part 1: Introduce the workshop
- Part 2: Review the PIP process
- Part 3: Present context information
- Part 4: Develop a PI vision
- Part 5: Develop the PI framework
- Part 6: Brainstorm PI activities
- Part 7: Summary and feedback

Introduction

A public involvement planning (PIP) workshop is a participatory process used to involve key internal and external stakeholders in developing a PI strategy. Ensuring that stakeholders contribute to the decision-making process can lead to a well-informed, creative and effective PI strategy. There will also be increased ownership of the PI strategy among these stakeholders.

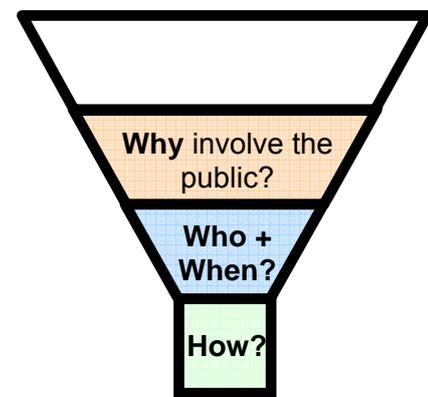
The primary aim of a PIP workshop is to generate information and ideas that will be used by the PIP group to prepare the final PI strategy. The workshop involves presentations based on material from Section B and workshop activities in which participants use this material to come up with ideas for the PI strategy.

The main focus of the workshop is Step 3 of the PIP process (see Section B):

What + **Why** + **Who** + **When** = **How**

You can also use the workshop to explore the evaluation approach described in Step 4 of Section B.

Box 17 summarises the information outcomes from the workshop.



A public involvement vision, comprising:

- Overall goal for the PI strategy
- Overall objectives for the PI strategy
- Principles for conducting the PI strategy

A public involvement framework, comprising:

- Specific PI objectives for relevant stages in the decision-making process (Why)
- The stages in the decision-making process that the public will be involved in (When)
- Identified target audiences for each objective (Who)
- Strategies for selecting/representing target audiences (Who)
- Evaluation criteria for each objective

Public involvement activities:

- Suggested PI activities that match the PI framework (How)

Box 17: Checklist of workshop outcomes

In what follows we set out the steps for running a large PIP workshop. However, the same steps should also guide a smaller workshop involving only the PIP group. Experienced practitioners might adapt the following material to fit their current practice, while the less experienced will find it provides a step-by-step guide.

How to prepare for a PIP workshop

There are three elements to preparing a PIP workshop:

- Decide how the workshop will be conducted
- Prepare information for the workshop
- Organise facilitators and presenters.

Decide how the workshop will be conducted

Choose who to invite

A PIP workshop is used to involve key internal and external stakeholders who can provide strategic advice about the PI strategy in its planning stage. The number of participants will depend on the complexity of the initiative and the likely size and scope of the PI program. For small PI programs a group of four or five people may be sufficient. In some cases, the workshop may only involve the members of the PIP group. For more complex programs involving several communities and/or groups of stakeholders, a large group of people (forty plus) may participate with people working in smaller groups in workshop activities.

Workshop participants generally represent:

- significantly affected internal or external stakeholder groups or organisations
- people who are highly knowledgeable about locally affected communities
- key internal or external stakeholders whose buy-in to the PI process is key to its success or who may be asked to coordinate outreach into their communities.

Tip: *Allow plenty of time to get your invitations out and to give people sufficient notice to organise their schedules.*

Devise a schedule

The actual length of the workshop will vary depending on the scope and size of the PI strategy, the number of participants and their experience. While there is no strict guide, the suggestions outlined in Table 4 may help you to decide how much time to allocate.

	Small number of participants	Large number of participants
Small initiative with modest PI program	1/2 day	1/2 – 3/4 day
Large initiative with significant PI program	3/4 – 1 day	1 – 2 days

Table 4: Suggested time allocation for a PIP workshop

Tip: *Always allow more time than you think you need because of starting delays, technical glitches or discussions that get contentious or ‘stuck’.*

Where and when to hold the workshop

The appropriate venue and time for the workshop will largely depend on the number and type of participants. Daytime workshops are most appropriate when you have a large group of organisational stakeholders (those whose attendance would be considered part of their job responsibilities), but this can create problems for community stakeholders who may need to take time off work. This is a matter of judgement on the part of the PIP group and may require reimbursement or payment for community members' time.

The venue should be accessible for all participants and away from other distractions (telephones, other meetings and so on) so that people are encouraged to focus on the tasks and not come and go. The venue should also be set up to encourage group discussion and activities, preferably with round tables and a central presentation point that all participants can see easily.

Prepare information for the workshop

You need to:

- determine the content of presentations
- design activities
- prepare any background reports
- prepare overheads or powerpoint presentations and handouts of all information
- prepare a workshop introduction and summary report give to workshop participants prior to the workshop
- prepare any extra case studies or examples to supplement the presentations or activities.

We provide more information on suggested content for presentations and activities in this section. You should also draw from material presented in Sections A and B, and check the Resources section for related material.

Organise facilitators and presenters

A good facilitator is critical to the success of the overall workshop. The facilitator should have sound presentation and group management skills, be positive and, if possible, a neutral party in relation to the decisions being made. The presentations will usually be made by the PI planner, other key internal people and special invited guests.

For larger workshops it may also be necessary to identify small-group discussion facilitators and group discussion recorders (scribes) and reporters, although groups can also choose these from their membership on the day.

Running a PIP workshop

The PIP workshop process has seven parts:

1. Introduce the workshop
2. Review the PIP process
3. Present contextual information
4. Develop the PI vision
5. Develop the PI framework
6. Brainstorm PI activities
7. Summarise and seek feedback.

We will now take you through each part, using the following common headings: description, information to present and approximate time. Some of the steps in the process also include a workshop activity.

Part 1: Introduce the workshop

Description

Welcome participants to the workshop, discuss the role of the workshop in the overall PIP process and provide an overview of the workshop structure.

Information to present

The introduction might include:

- a welcome for participants
- a summary of workshop aims and objectives, format and intended outputs, roles and responsibilities, participation ground-rules and any 'housekeeping' matters
- time for questions.

The facilitator should explain the role of the PIP group and clarify that the purpose of the workshop is to generate ideas for this group to consider rather than to develop a final PI strategy. It is not necessary to reach consensus on any or all of the issues, and the facilitator should encourage participants to debate and express a range of ideas.

Approximate time

Welcoming remarks: 15 minutes

Summary of workshop: 10 minutes

Questions: 5 minutes

Part 2: Review the PIP process

Description

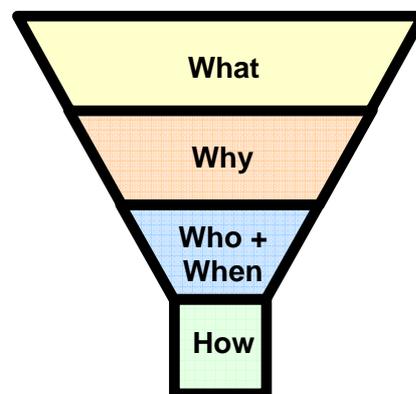
This involves presenting a detailed introduction on the PIP process (see Section A). The amount, style and detail of this information will largely depend on the audience. However, we have found that even with a group that has previous experience of PI it is useful to review this information briefly so there is a common starting point and so that people are in the right frame of mind.

Information to present

This might include:

- a definition of PI
- a discussion of the benefits of PI
- a basic introduction to the planning process for PI (including the funnel diagram and the PIP 'equation').

What + Why + Who + When = How



Approximate time

Presentation of background information: 20 minutes

Questions: 5 minutes

Part 3: Present contextual information

Description

This part of the workshop reviews the contextual information from Section B, Step 2. This should be an open process with participants able to ask questions and add new information. It should be done with the entire audience, although if there is a likelihood of significant debate on some issues you may wish use small groups to give participants a chance to speak.

Information to present

Begin by clarifying why this information is important to the PIP process, particularly how the decision-making and organisational context can provide different opportunities and constraints, and how the social and political context can affect what methods and techniques are appropriate. An experienced PI practitioner could speak about these matters using personal experiences and anecdotes to illustrate issues.

A senior official could speak about the initiative and respond to questions about the decision-making process, the timeframe and constraints. At the end of this part of the workshop there should be shared understanding of the basic stages in the decision-making process and what is involved at each stage. These stages will be used later in the workshop.

The PI planner should also provide an overview of the social and political context of the initiative and respond to questions. For larger initiatives and complex PI programs it might be useful to have an experienced PI practitioner speak using personal experiences and anecdotes to illustrate issues relevant to the context and initiative.

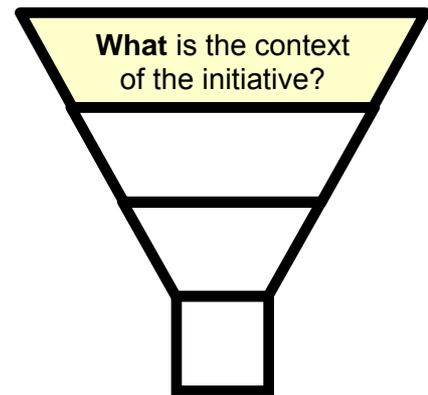
Presenters need to be properly briefed by the PI planner about who will be attending the workshop so they can be prepared for questions they might encounter from participants. The PI planner should also review the information before it is presented to ensure the information is accurate and reliable.

In most situations it will be useful to provide participants with a brief summary report prior to the workshop. The report does not have to be detailed but it should cover the critical information about the context. The information should be based on the background summary report prepared in Step 2 of the PIP process (see Section B).

Approximate time

Presentation of background information: 20–45 minutes

Questions: 10–15 minutes



Part 4: Develop the PI vision

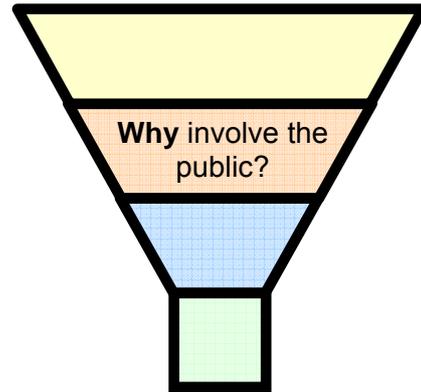
Description

The aim of this part of the PIP workshop is to identify overall goals, objectives and principles to guide the PI strategy (see Section B, Step 3). These goals, objectives and principles comprise an overall vision for the PI strategy.

Information to present

This should include:

- why we involve the public (some of the potential purposes and objectives for PI) (see Section B, Step 3)
- the basic principles of PI (see Section A).



Presenting this background information is a way of ensuring that all participants have a shared language and understanding that they can use in the first activity.

Workshop activity

Participants work in small groups (of around six people) to develop a vision for public involvement by discussing and deciding on overall goals, objectives and principles for the public involvement strategy.

Groups should write their ideas on large pieces of paper or a printable whiteboard so that the groups can share their ideas with each other. There are a number of different ways that groups may decide to write up their vision. However, it is important that whatever format you choose the participants devise:

- an overall goal statement
- a list of overall objectives that will enable the goal to be achieved
- a list of principles that will guide the PI strategy.

Each group should have a facilitator, scribe and speaker. The speaker should report back the results to the larger group at the end of the exercise.

Approximate time

Background information: 15 minutes

Introduction to activity and questions: 5–10 minutes

Activity: 30 minutes and 20 minutes for whole group feedback/discussion

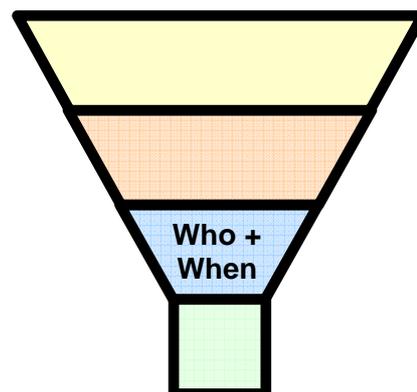
Part 5: Develop the PI framework

Description

Participants use their vision to help them think about more specific objectives for PI for each stage of the decision-making process.

Information to present

The presenter should discuss the types of specific objectives that might be appropriate to stages in the decision-making process (see Section B, Step 2).



It might also be useful to present information on different types of communities or stakeholder groups that might be involved in the PI process, and how these different groups might be selected or represented (see Section B, Step 3).

In this stage participants could also identify evaluation criteria that match their specific objectives. If you decide to do this you would need to present some information on evaluation criteria that match objectives (see Section B, Step 4).

Workshop activity

Working in small groups, participants identify specific objectives for each stage of the decision-making process, in particular addressing who should be involved, how they will be selected or recruited and possible evaluation criteria (see Box 18 for an example worksheet).

Participants should complete these worksheets on large pieces of paper or on a printable whiteboard so that the groups can share their ideas with each other at the end of the exercise.

Stage	Objective	Target audience	Strategies for selecting/recruiting	Evaluation criteria

Box 18: Sample worksheet layout

Approximate time

Background information: 15 minutes

Introduction to activity and questions: 5–10 minutes

Activity: 30–60 minutes, and 20–40 minutes for whole group feedback/discussion

Part 6: Brainstorm PI activities

Description

Participants identify potential PI methods and techniques that match the PI objectives identified in the previous workshop activity.

Information to present

Depending on the experience of the workshop participants, you may need to present information about different PI methods and techniques drawing from Section B, Step 3, and the Resources section.

Workshop activity

Participants work in their small groups to identify different methods and techniques for PI that might match the objectives developed in the previous workshop activity. An extra column can be added to the worksheet from the last exercise so that participants can write their ideas down.

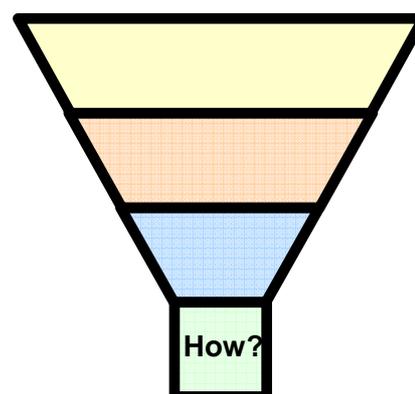
The groups should report on their ideas to the rest of the participants.

Approximate time

Background information: 15 minutes

Introduction to activity and questions: 5–10 minutes

Activity: 20–40 minutes, and 10–30 minutes for whole group feedback/discussion



Part 7: Summarise and seek feedback

Description

This part involves summarising the information that participants have produced at the workshop and discussing how the PIP group will use the information to develop the PI strategy. Workshop members should also be advised that they will receive a copy of the draft PI strategy for comment.

If time permits, you may wish to try to reach consensus on some parts of the strategy, most likely the overall vision and objectives. You may also wish to discuss what people got out of the workshop or any other ideas or thoughts they would like to share. If you are evaluating this PIP workshop then you should do this here too.

Information to present

In this part of the workshop the emphasis is on discussion and dialogue rather than new information being disseminated to participants.

Approximate time

Discussion: 30–60 mins

Resources

General resources (most of these resources cover a range of topics)

Australian Capital Territory (ACT) Govt, 2005, *Your Guide to Engaging with the Community*, ACT Govt, available online at <http://www.dhcs.act.gov.au/engagement/pubs/community%20engagement%20manual.pdf>, viewed 22 December 2005.

Carson, Lyn & Gelber, Katharine, 2001, *Ideas for Community Consultation: A Discussion on Principles and Procedures for Making Consultation Work*, A Report Prepared for the NSW Dept of Urban Affairs and Planning, available online at http://www.duap.nsw.gov.au/planfirst/pdf/principles_procedures_final.pdf, viewed 22 December 2005.

Citizens and Civics Unit, Dept of Premier and Cabinet (DPC)(2003) *Consulting Citizens: Planning for Success*, DPC, Perth, Western Australia, available online at http://www.citizenscape.wa.gov.au/documents/red_guide.pdf, viewed 19 November 2005.

Citizens and Civics Unit, Dept of Premier and Cabinet (DPC)(2002) *Consulting Citizens: A Resource Guide*, DPC, Perth, Western Australia, available online at http://www.citizenscape.wa.gov.au/documents/blue_guide.pdf, viewed 19 November 2005.

Citizens and Civics Unit, Dept of Premier and Cabinet (DPC)(n.d) *Citizenscape*, DPC, WA, Available online at <http://www.citizenscape.wa.gov.au/index.cfm?fuseaction=home.welcome>, viewed 22 December 2005.

Community Engagement Division (2004) *Engaging Queenslanders: A Guide to Community Engagement Showcasing Events*, Queensland Government, Brisbane, available online at http://www.getinvolved.qld.gov.au/share_your_knowledge/resources/documents/pdf/guide_showcasing.pdf, viewed 19 November 2005.

Community Policy Unit, Office of Multicultural and Community Affairs, Chief Minister's Department (2001) *Consultation Manual 2001: Hand On Help for Planning Effective Consultation Strategies*, ACT Government, Canberra, available online at <http://iplan.nsw.gov.au/engagement/stories/docs/actmanual2001.pdf>, viewed 22 December 2005.

Department of Communities (2005) *Engaging Queenslanders: An Introduction to Community Engagement*, Queensland Government, Brisbane, available online at http://www.getinvolved.qld.gov.au/share_your_knowledge/resources/documents/pdf/Intro_CE.pdf, viewed 19 November 2005.

Department of Communities (2005) *Engaging Queenslanders: Get Involved*, Queensland Government, Brisbane, available online at

- http://www.getinvolved.qld.gov.au/share_your_knowledge/resources/documents/pdf/guide_improvingce.pdf, viewed 19 November 2005.
- Department of Communities (2005) *Engaging Queenslanders: Community Engagement in the Business of Government*, Queensland Government, Brisbane, available online at http://www.getinvolved.qld.gov.au/share_your_knowledge/resources/documents/pdf/CE_Business_Gov.pdf, viewed 19 November 2005.
- Department of Infrastructure, Planning and Natural Resources (2005) *Community Engagement in the NSW Planning System*, Website, NSW Government, <http://www.iplan.nsw.gov.au/engagement/>, viewed 22 December 2005.
- Department of Infrastructure, Planning and Natural Resources (2003) *The Community Engagement Handbook*, NSW Government, available online at <http://www.iplan.nsw.gov.au/engagement/intro/print.jsp>, viewed 22 December 2005.
- Local Government Association of Queensland (LGAQ) (2003) *Community Consultation Guide for Queensland Local Government*, LGAQ, Brisbane.
- Oldham Council (n.d.) *The Consultation Toolkit*, Website, Oldham Council, Oldham, U.K., http://www.oldham.gov.uk/council/consultation_events/ace-toolkit.htm, viewed 22 December 2005.
- Sarkissian, Wendy; Hirst, Angela & Stenberg, Beauford (with Steph Walton) (2003), *Community Participation in Practice: New Directions*, Institute for Science and Technology Policy, Murdoch University, Murdoch, Western Australia.
- Sarkissian, Wendy; Cook, Andrea & Walsh, Kelvin (1997) *Community Participation in Practice: A Practical Guide*, Institute for Science and Technology Policy, Murdoch University, Murdoch, Western Australia.
- Sarkissian, Wendy & Perglut, Donald (eds) (with Elaine Ballard & Kelvin Walsh) (1994) *The Community Participation Handbook: Resources for Public Involvement in the Planning Process*, 3rd edn, Institute for Science and Technology Policy, Murdoch University, Murdoch, Western Australia (in association with Impacts Press).
- Stewart, Lillian (n.d.) *Community Consultation Tool Kit*, Website, Western Valley Development Authority, Nova Scotia, <http://www.wvda.com/cctk/toolkit.html>, viewed 22 December 2005.
- Seargeant, John & Steele, Jane (1998) *Consulting the Public: Guidelines and Good Practice*, Policy Studies Institute, London.
- Warringah Council (2000) *Community Consultation Framework*, Website, Warringah Council, NSW, http://www.warringah.nsw.gov.au/community_consultation.htm, viewed 22 December 2005.

Wates, Nick (site ed.) (n.d.) *The Community Planning Website*, <http://www.communityplanning.net>, Website hosted by the Royal Town Planning Institute, London, viewed 22 December 2005.

Specialist resources

Planning public involvement

Creighton, James L. (n.d.) *How to Design a Public Participation Program*, Office of Intergovernmental and Public Accountability, US Department of Energy, available online at <http://web.em.doe.gov/ftplink/public/doeguide.pdf>, viewed 22 December 2005.

Involving Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Communities

ATSIC; Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Services; Department of Indigenous Affairs; & Dept of the Premier and Cabinet Citizens and Civics Unit (n.d.) *Engaging with Aboriginal Western Australians*, State Govt of Western Australia, Perth, available online at http://www.citizenscape.wa.gov.au/documents/ochre_guide.pdf, viewed 22 December 2005.

Departments of Communities and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Policy (2005) *Engaging Queenslanders: Introduction to Working with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Communities*, Queensland Government, Brisbane, available online at http://www.getinvolved.qld.gov.au/share_your_knowledge/resources/documents/pdf/CE_Business_Gov.pdf, viewed 19 November 2005.

Methods and techniques for PI

Coastal CRC, 2003, *Citizen Science Toolbox*, Website, Hosted by the Urban Research Program, Griffith University, Australia, <https://www3.secure.griffith.edu.au/03/toolbox/>, viewed 7 July 2006.

International Association for Public Participation (IAP2) 2000, *Public Participation Toolbox*, Website, IAP2, <http://www.iap2.org/associations/4748/files/toolbox.pdf>, viewed 22 December 2005.

Suter & Associates Leisure & Tourism Planners (with Warringah Council Strategy Unit) (2000) *Warringah Council Community Consultation Toolkit*, Warringah Council, NSW, available online at http://www.warringah.nsw.gov.au/pdf/community_consultation_toolkit.pdf, viewed 22 December 2005.

Evaluating PI

Greenway, Paul (2005) *Evaluating Consultation: A Short Guide*, Citizenscape, UK, available online at <http://www.citizenscape.com/news.php>, viewed 19 November 2005.

Johnson, Anna L. (2004) *Engaging Queenslanders: Evaluating Community Engagement*, Queensland Government Department of Communities, Brisbane, available online at http://www.getinvolved.qld.gov.au/share_your_knowledge/resources/documents/pdf/guide_evaluation.pdf, viewed 19 November 2005.

Rowe, Gene & Frewer, Lynn, J. (2000) 'Public Participation Methods: A Framework for Evaluation', *Science, Technology and Human Values*, 25(1), 3-29.

Running workshops

Keating, Colma (2003) *Facilitation Toolkit: A Practical Guide for Working More Effectively with People and Groups*, Dept of Environmental Protection; Water and Rivers Commission; Dept of Conservation and Land Management, Western Australia, available online at http://portal.environment.wa.gov.au/pls/portal/docs/PAGE/DOE_ADMIN/PUBLICATION_REPOSITORY/FACILITATION%20TOOLKIT.PDF, viewed 22 December 2005.

Notes and references

¹ The research was funded by an Australian Research Council Linkage grant (Project ID LP0211870) with the Queensland Department of Local Government and Planning (SEQ2021) as the contributing Industry Partner. Other relevant publications from the grant are:

- Cameron, Jenny & Grant-Smith, Deanna (2005) 'Building Citizens: Participatory Planning Practice and a Transformative Politics of Difference', in *Urban Policy and Research*, 23(1), 25–40.
- Cameron, Jenny; Grant-Smith, Deanna & Johnson, Anna 2005. 'Formative Evaluation for Improving Collaborative Planning: A Case Study at the Regional Scale', *Australian Planner*, 42(3), 22–29.
- Cameron, Jenny & Johnson, Anna L. (2004) 'Evaluating for Development: Planning for Public Involvement in SEQ2021', *Australian Planner*, 41(1), 49–55.

² See Note 1, Cameron & Johnson 2004

³ Creighton, James L. (n.d.) *How to Design a Public Participation Program*, Office of Intergovernmental and Public Accountability, US Department of Energy, available online at <http://web.em.doe.gov/ftplink/public/doeguide.pdf>, viewed 22 December 2005, p. 8

⁴ Yosie, Terry & Herbst, Timothy (1998) *Using Stakeholder Processes in Environmental Decision making: An Evaluation of Lessons Learned, Key Issues, and Future Challenges*, available online at <http://www.gdrc.org/decision/nr98ab01.pdf>

⁵ See Note 3, p. 14

⁶ See Note 3, p. 23

⁷ A quick Google search on the term 'rapid rural appraisal' will find plenty of useful materials.

⁸ Citizens and Civics Unit, Department of Premier and Cabinet (DPC)(2003) *Consulting Citizens: Planning for Success*, DPC, Perth, Western Australia, available online at http://www.citizenscape.wa.gov.au/documents/red_guide.pdf, viewed 19 November 2005, pp. 31–37

⁹ See Note 8, p. 28

¹⁰ For a more detailed guide on this see Johnson, Anna L. (2004) *Engaging Queenslanders: Evaluating Community Engagement*, Queensland Government Department of Communities, Brisbane, available online at http://www.getinvolved.qld.gov.au/share_your_knowledge/resources/documents/pdf/guide_evaluation.pdf, viewed 19 November 2005

¹¹ Greenway, Paul (2005) *Evaluating Consultation: A Short Guide*, Citizenscape, UK, available online at <http://www.citizenscape.com/news.php>, viewed 19 November 2005, p. 8

¹² See Note 10

¹³ Adapted from Johnson (2004), pp. 19-20 and Community Policy Unit, Office of Multicultural and Community Affairs, Chief Minister's Department (2001) *Consultation Manual 2001: Hand On Help for Planning Effective Consultation Strategies*, ACT Government, Canberra, available online at <http://iplan.nsw.gov.au/engagement/stories/docs/actmanual2001.pdf>, viewed 22 December 2005