



Department of Planning,
Lands and Heritage



Strategic Engagement Framework

July 2025

SOLUTIONS FOCUSED FOR A
VIBRANT WESTERN AUSTRALIA



Acknowledgement of country

The Department of Planning, Lands and Heritage acknowledges the Aboriginal people as the traditional custodians of Western Australia. We pay our respects to the Ancestors and Elders, both past and present, and the ongoing connection between people, land, waters and community. We acknowledge those who continue to share knowledge, their traditions and culture to support our journey for reconciliation. In particular, we recognise land and cultural heritage as places that hold great significance for Aboriginal people.

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Table of Contents

Executive summary	3	Department stakeholders	11
Framework purpose	4	Engagement tools and resources	12
Department of Planning, Lands and Heritage	5	Stakeholder Consultation Policy and Procedure	12
How does the Department support our statutory authorities?	5	Stakeholder Management Guidelines	12
Legislative landscape	5	Guide to Best Practice Planning Engagement in Western Australia	12
Alignment to the Department Strategic Plan and Agency Capability Review	6	Aboriginal Engagement Toolkit	13
Engagement philosophy	7		
Stakeholder engagement	8		
Benefits of good stakeholder engagement	8		
Engagement ecosystem	8		
Relationship between engagement and communications	10		

Executive summary

This Strategic Engagement Framework (Framework) has been developed to provide high-level guidance for how the Department of Planning, Lands and Heritage (Department) engages with stakeholders on behalf of itself and its statutory bodies.

The Framework sits under the Department's Communications and Engagement Strategy, which is guided by the Department's Strategic Plan.

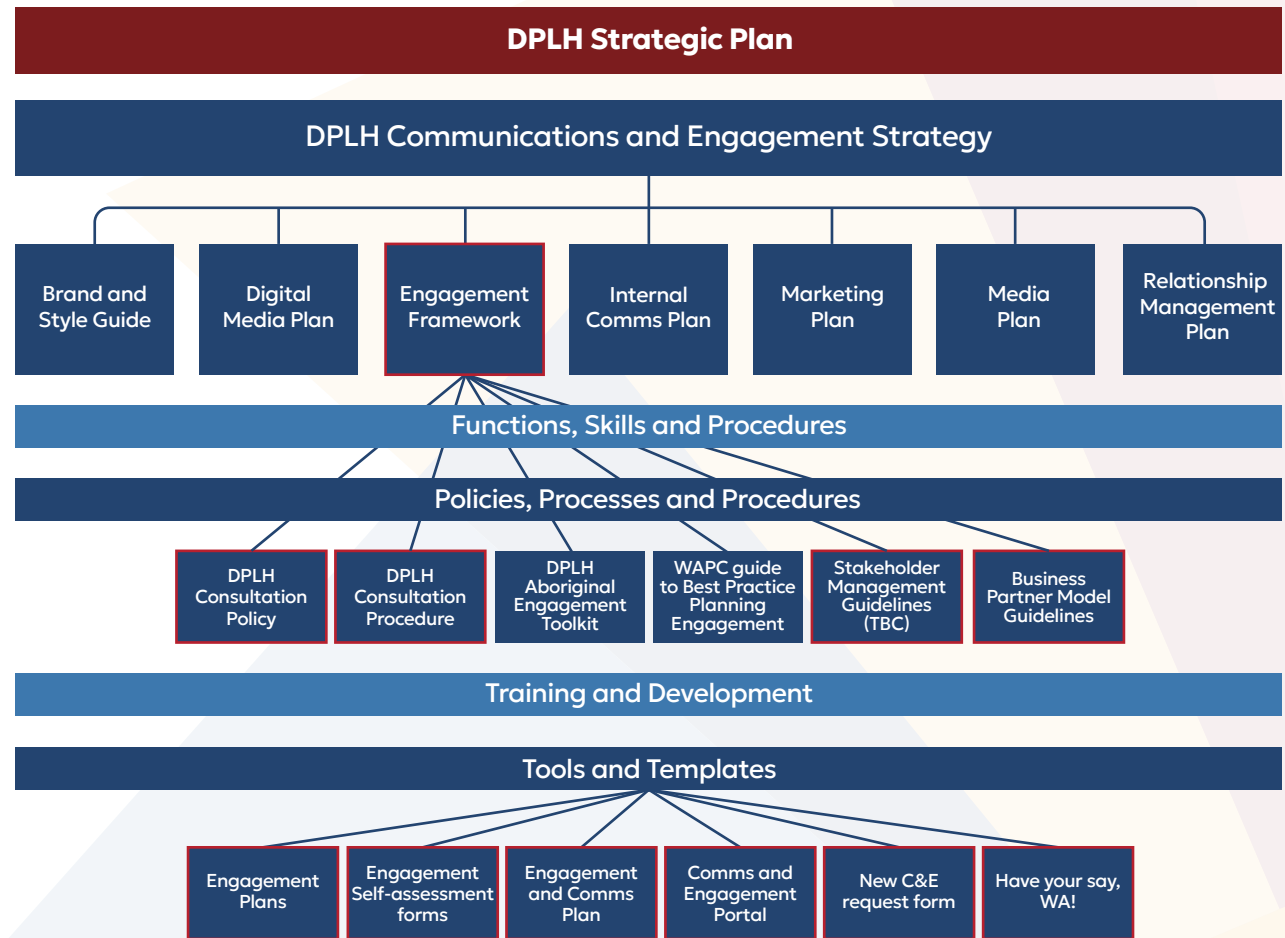
Stakeholder engagement can be complex and while best practice principles of engagement remain the same, the approach and context is different on almost every occasion, and almost always run by different Department representatives each time.

This Framework has been developed in consultation with all parts of the business with a focus on how the Department balances engaging with the same stakeholders on different matters.

To do this, the Framework identifies the 'engagement ecosystem' at the Department and looks at engagement approaches from different angles including:

- What are the engagement outcomes required by each of our statutory bodies?
- Who are the internal Department engagement enablers and what are their roles?
- Who are the stakeholders relevant to the Department, how are they already engaged, by who, how and when?

This Framework outlines the Department's engagement philosophy and is a signpost to other resources. It will be approved by the Department's Corporate Executive and reviewed every three years.



Framework purpose

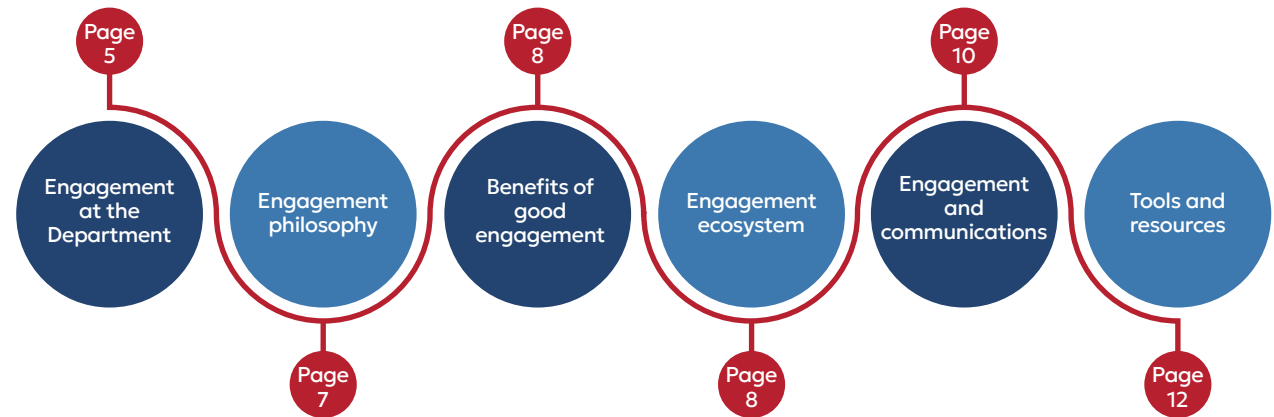
Although the portfolios located within the Department are complementary, staff are guided by a range of different internal guidelines and legislated approaches to stakeholder engagement.

This Framework provides a department-wide foundation to stakeholder engagement that can be adapted to meet specific needs when no existing framework or tools are available.

This Strategic Engagement Framework aims to:

- Establish the Department's engagement philosophy and define its impact on our stakeholders.
- Establish the benefits of good engagement.
- Identify the eco-system of engagement at the Department to ensure a balanced approach.
- Identify our statutory authorities and ensure the Framework provides a baseline for how the Department services their broad engagement requirements.
- Define high-level stakeholder categories.
- Form the basis for any future tools and resources created to support engagements specific to each Division.

Document structure



Department of Planning, Lands and Heritage

How does the Department support our statutory authorities?

The Department brings all urban planning, land management and built and cultural heritage responsibilities under a single organisation to shape the future of Western Australia's cities, regions and towns. The Department administers a wide range of legislation on behalf of its decision-making bodies, and Ministers across the portfolios of Planning, Lands, Heritage and Aboriginal Affairs.

The Department provides support for the following statutory bodies:

- Western Australian Planning Commission
- Heritage Council of Western Australia
- Pastoral Lands Board
- Aboriginal Cultural Heritage Committee
- Aboriginal Lands Trust
- Development Assessment Panels.

Department staff act as subject matter experts to assist in decision making by these statutory bodies, Minister/s and to support Government priorities. This ensures decisions are supported by an appropriate level of technical advice, feedback from relevant stakeholders and in accordance with Legislation.

In addition, the Office of the Director General is responsible for the oversight of the efficient running of Corporate Executive, some elements of the various statutory bodies and the Government Architect of Western Australia.

Business and Corporate Services Division acts as the central hub that ensures Department staff are supported by human resources, finance, technology, communications and stakeholder engagement needs.

This Framework sets out the Department's stakeholder engagement approach and philosophy employed on behalf of these statutory bodies and agency advisors.

Legislative landscape

The Department was established as an agency on 1 July 2017, under the *Public Sector Management Act 1994*. Additional legislation relevant to the Department's functions can be found in any [annual report](#).

Agency



Department of **Planning, Lands and Heritage**

Agency decision makers



HERITAGE COUNCIL



Aboriginal Cultural Heritage Committee



Government of **Western Australia**
Development Assessment Panels

Agency advisors



Alignment to the Department's Strategic Plan and Agency Capability Review

A recommendation of the 2022 Agency Capability Review identified that an 'engagement framework' is required to ensure the Department is providing a high level of service to stakeholders. This document, and the supporting instruments ensures the standards of engagement at the Department is always improving.

This finding has been embedded into the Department's 2025–2029 Strategic Plan under the heading:

Shaping Communities:

"Build community awareness of long-term Government priorities for sustainable development of land and how this informs decision making."

This Framework serves as a guide for the Department and its decision makers, and creates the foundation for other governance instruments to be prepared that will ensure the below enabling principle of '*Facilitating*' is achieved:

"We help establish, build, and maintain relationships with our stakeholders by working across the Public Sector to achieve balanced outcomes."



Engagement philosophy

The Department subscribes to the guidance provided by International Association Public Participation (IAP2). Planned or reactive engagement run by the Department uses the IAP2 spectrum of engagement as the basis.

Building on this philosophy, and to ensure consistent and coordinated engagement outcomes at the Department, diagram one sets what constitutes 'good engagement'.

Diagram one: Defining 'good engagement'



Stakeholder engagement

Benefits of good stakeholder engagement

Good stakeholder engagement will:

- Improve awareness and understanding of our work and items of interest among stakeholders, fostering informed decision-making.
- Uncover new ideas, perspectives and expertise, enriching discussions and decision-making processes based on local understanding, technical knowledge and various experiences.
- Allow for proposals to be tested and refined, ensuring that our objectives are achieved, and outcomes are delivered effectively.
- Improve relationships with our stakeholders and the community, reducing conflict and fostering cooperation.
- Engage individuals, groups and organisations that are affected, interested, or impacted by proposals or decisions ensuring that their interests and concerns are reflected in decision-making processes.
- Deliver smoother and more efficient assessment processes through effective engagement, leading to more certain decision-making processes and outcomes.



Engagement ecosystem

The spectrum of stakeholder engagement at the Department takes on many forms and can range anything from an email to a Local Government officer, negotiating a state land divestment deal with an Aboriginal Corporation in the Kimberley, regular and scheduled meetings with industry peak bodies to discuss emerging issues and advertising planning applications.

All are integral to the Department being able to execute business as required by various Legislation and Government priorities.

There may be situations where staff inadvertently engage with stakeholders that are also part of other active engagement projects in the Department. This may cause a reputation risk related to lack of internal coordination of stakeholder engagements and consultation.

Understanding the levels and types of engagement the Department undertakes ensures stakeholders are not over, or under engaged.

Diagram two: Engagement ecosystem

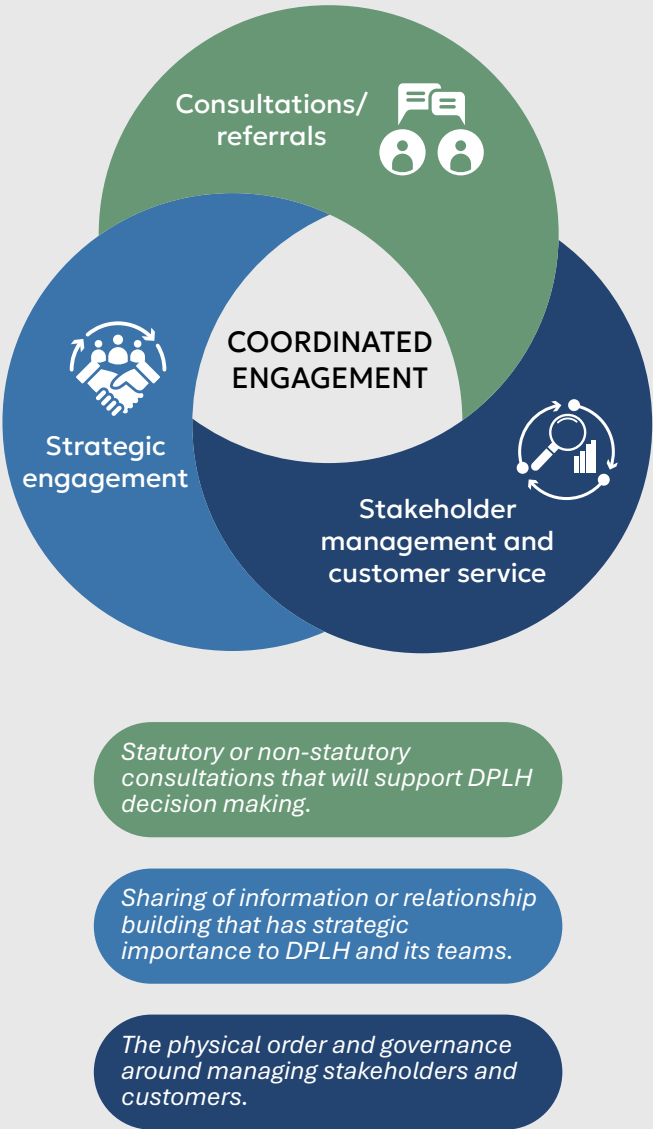
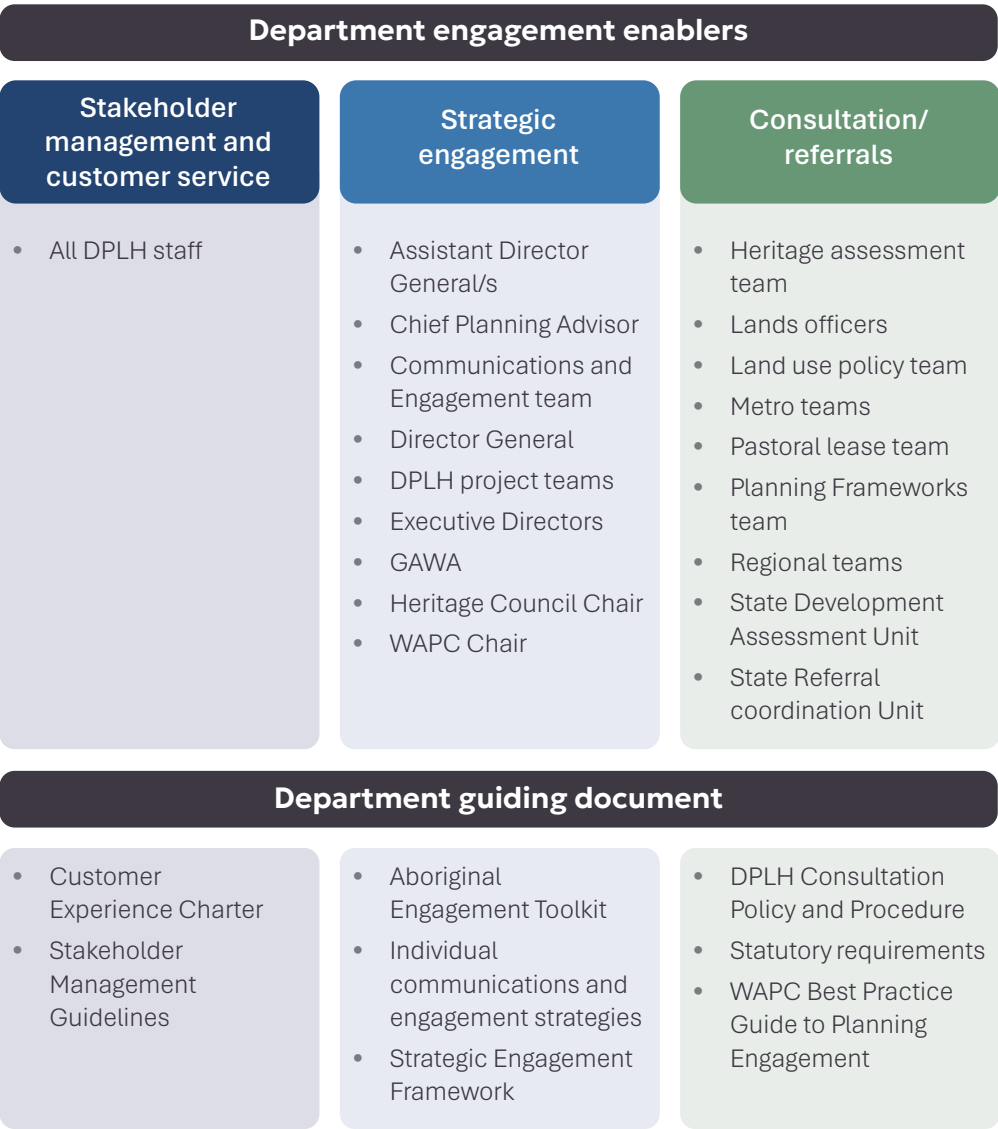


Diagram three: Engagement ecosystem responsibilities and guiding documents



Relationship between engagement and communications

'Communications' and 'engagement communications' enjoy a symbiotic relationship, but they do have subtle differences in style.

At the Department, communication can generally be categorised into **one-way communication** and **two-way stakeholder engagement communications**.

One-way communication is a top-down approach where information is delivered without expecting immediate feedback.

Alternatively, two-way communication is interactive, allowing for dialogue between the organisation and stakeholders. This approach fosters engagement, trust, and collaboration by enabling feedback, discussion, and relationship-building.

One-way communication features:

- **Information dissemination:** Focused on delivering messages without expecting a response.
- **Control:** The sender retains full control over the message and how it is presented.
- **Efficiency:** Quick and cost-effective for mass communication (e.g., press releases, company newsletters, emails).
- **Limited engagement:** Audiences receive information passively, with no direct interaction.
- **Examples:** Corporate announcements, advertising, speeches, traditional news media.

Two-way stakeholder engagement communication features:

- **Dialogue and feedback:** Encourages stakeholders to respond, ask questions, and share opinions.
- **Collaboration:** Builds relationships by incorporating stakeholder input into decision-making.
- **Transparency:** Demonstrates openness and responsiveness, fostering trust.
- **Adaptability:** Messages can be adjusted based on stakeholder reactions and concerns.
- **Examples:** Public consultations, social media interactions, town hall meetings, customer feedback programs.



Department stakeholders

The Department includes three distinct subject matter areas. This results in a high number of stakeholders that need to be managed or engaged by many project teams.

The following list provides a signpost to those that could be considered when planning an engagement or stakeholder management program.

- Aboriginal Affairs Planning Authority
- Aboriginal Community Controlled Corporations
- Aboriginal Corporations
- Aboriginal Cultural Heritage Committee
- Aboriginal Cultural Material Committee
- Aboriginal Lands Trust
- Chambers of Commerce
- Community
- Consultants
- CorpEx, DPLH
- Development Assessment Panels
- Development Commissions
- Director Communications /
- Director Engagement
- Director General, DPLH
- Environmental Protection Authority
- Government Architect of Western Australia
- Heritage Council of WA



- Industry peaks, policy staff
- Industry peaks, President
- Infrastructure WA
- Infrastructure, Airports
- Infrastructure, Ports
- Local Government, CEO
- Local Government, Mayors
- Local Government, staff
- Minister for Aboriginal Affairs
- Minister for the Environment
- Minister for Heritage
- Minister for Lands
- Minister for Mines and Petroleum

- Minister for Planning
- Minister for Tourism
- Minister for Transport
- Pastoral Lands Board
- Premier of Western Australia
- State agencies
- Treasurer of Western Australia
- Utilities, electricity
- Utilities, gas
- Utilities, water
- Western Australian Planning Commission

Engagement tools and resources

Stakeholder Consultation Policy and Procedure

The Department's Stakeholder Consultation Policy and Stakeholder Consultation Procedure set the standard for both statutory and pro-active consultations facilitated by the Department.

The policy and procedure:

- Provides consultation guidance, where no guidance is already provided other than in Legislation.
- Supplements any requirements of Legislation, where the project and impact of the project warrants a more thorough consultation approach i.e. has a greater impact.
- Provides consultation principles and checklists for Department staff to use as a guide.
- Details in which cases project teams are recommended to include engagement staff.
- Creates the baseline for further reviews of other Department engagement resources.

Adopted by Corporate Executive in September 2024, it now forms part of the Corporate Policy Program.

Stakeholder Management Guidelines

The Department's *Stakeholder Management Guidelines* have been developed to guide staff on how they can take a more strategic and centralised approach to managing stakeholders.

These guidelines build on the stakeholder categories identified earlier in this Framework and provides guidance on:

- The recording of stakeholder interactions.
- Capturing notes when certain stakeholders are engaged or when interaction contribute or form part of a decision or position of the Department.
- Ensuring a centralised stakeholder database is maintained available to all staff.
- Ensuring a greater level of coordination is achieved internally to improve our external reputation with stakeholders.

Guide to Best Practice Planning Engagement in Western Australia

The Western Australian Planning Commission (WAPC) endorsed the '*Guide to Best Practice Planning Engagement in Western Australia*' in 2022, which aims to promote best-practice engagement and consultation and foster good urban planning outcomes.

It includes a '6-Step Guide' for scoping, designing, implementing, reporting and monitoring engagement processes.

The document is non-statutory and does not bind regulators or proponents to undertake engagement beyond minimum statutory consultation requirements. This document is intended to assist users of the planning system (regulators and proponents) to supplement and support statutory requirements and assist in the design and delivery of best practice consultation and engagement (where necessary and appropriate).

The Guide is intended to be a contemporary, living document that will be modified and updated over time, to ensure it remains fit for purpose. The Department will monitor the implementation of the guide and identify any necessary modifications to ensure its ongoing relevance. To ensure the currency of the Guide is maintained the WAPC has delegated the approval of future modifications and updates to the WAPC Chair.

Aboriginal Engagement Toolkit

The Department consults frequently with Aboriginal communities and stakeholders. To support this, a toolkit has been prepared to promote mindful planning of consultations and engagements, to ensure they planned in the right way, at the right time and with the right people.

The toolkit includes advice on:

- Engagement planning
- Stakeholder identification
- Partnerships
- Communication methods and styles, including Aboriginal language
- Terms to use and avoid
- Protocols
- Welcome / Acknowledgment of Country
- Meeting strategies
- Accessibility.

Like all engagement tools at the Department, the Aboriginal Engagement Toolkit should be reviewed periodically to ensure it remains an up-to-date resource for those who need to engage with Aboriginal stakeholders.

