

Community and stakeholder engagement for CHRMAP and other coastal planning

Developing coastal adaptation plans, including Coastal Hazard Risk Management and Adaptation Plans (CHRMAP), can be observed as a scientific process, highly technical in nature and well suited to subject matter experts.

However, it is critical to engage the community and relevant stakeholders during the development of coastal adaptation plans, coastal planning and management activities, adaptation options assessments and implementation of on-ground works.

Community and stakeholder engagement for CHRMAPs can and should help identify the values held for various coastal assets, inform the community's tolerance to the identified coastal hazard risks, consider and help guide potential adaptation options to address risks, and indicate the level of support for these options.

Key to the purpose of such engagement is to ensure the local community understand the possible future scenarios, have growing coastal hazard literacy, understand the decision making that is required by coastal managers, and can contribute to adaptation either directly or indirectly and understand the reasons for adaptation in the first instance.

Engagement is described as necessary for development of hazard adaptation in a variety of the coastal adaptation policy documents, and is further embedded as an important part of the urban and regional planning system within which coastal adaptation planning sits.

Where to begin

CHRMAPs are completed in accordance with SPP 2.6 State Planning Policy - State Coastal Planning (SPP 2.6) and the CHRMAP Guidelines. While the process for other coastal adaptation planning is more flexible, the now long-established process of SPP 2.6 has ensured it is

increasingly more likely that other coastal plans will be undertaken subsequent to an initial CHRMAP, delivering on the flexible adaptation pathways recommended in the CHRMAP¹.

The stages undertaken for developing a CHRMAP are illustrated in Figure 1, which also shows the continuum beyond the completion of the CHRMAP (i.e. delivery and then reviews).

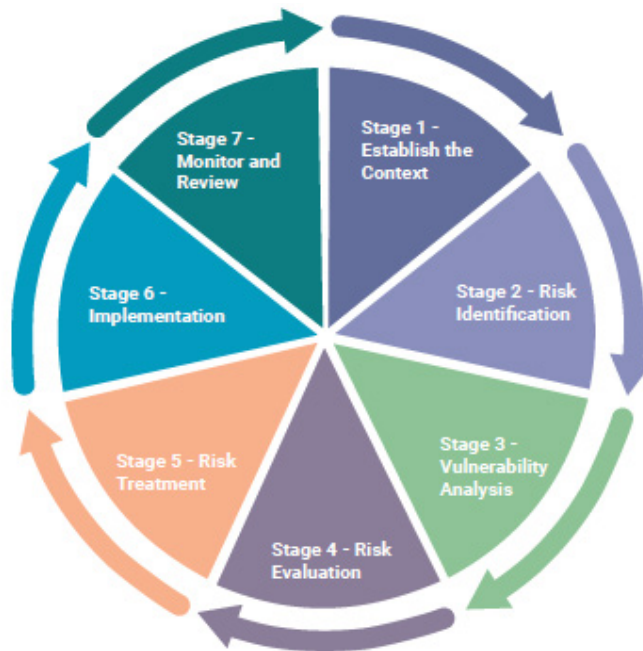


Figure 1: The CHRMAP Process (WAPC 2019)

Guidance on engagement for developing coastal adaptation plans

[State Planning Policy 2.6 - State Coastal Planning Policy](#) (SPP 2.6) provides the legislative powers for CHRMAP development.

SPP 2.6 is supported by the [State Coastal Planning Policy Guidelines](#) (2020) and the [WA Coastal Zone Strategy](#) (2017).

The [Coastal Hazard Risk Management and Adaptation Planning Guidelines](#) (2019) (the CHRMAP Guidelines) detail how to develop a CHRMAP and includes advice on engagement directly.

A [consultant scope of works](#) is available for developing a CHRMAP, and a draft scope of works is also available for developing a CHRMAP review from the Department of Planning, Lands and Heritage (DPLH)².

The [Coastal Planning and Management Manual](#) (2003) provides useful information about matters that are often a challenge, particularly with regard to engagement, in developing CHRMAPs.

A number of supporting appendices are also relevant to engagement in the CHRMAP Guidelines for coastal adaptation planning projects.

In addition to coastal adaptation planning specific guidance, DPLH and the Western Australian Planning Commission (WAPC) have developed the [Guide to Best Practice Planning Engagement in Western Australia](#) (Figure 2).

This guide (the Engagement Guide) has been developed to reflect the Western Australian planning context.

¹ See previous training modules for more information about how to develop a CHRMAP

² Please email coastal@dplh.wa.gov.au if you would like a copy

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Figure 2: Cover, Guide to Best Practice Planning Engagement in Western Australia

This Fact Sheet refers to guidance and tools available in the Engagement Guide for urban planning engagement in Western Australian, recognising that it applies to all planning activities. However, this Fact Sheet aims to add value by providing specific guidance for engagement in coastal adaptation planning projects, rather than repeating its content.

Lastly, this Fact Sheet acknowledges the International Association of Public Participation (IAP2), a leading organisation for guidance of engagement globally. The IAP2 is referenced in the Engagement Guide and in the SPP 2.6 policy framework.

IAP2 describes engagement with the community and stakeholders as being on a spectrum from low to high levels of engagement (see Figure 3). The IAP2 provides guidance on when the various levels should be utilised, and this Fact Sheet expands on this for coastal adaptation planning.

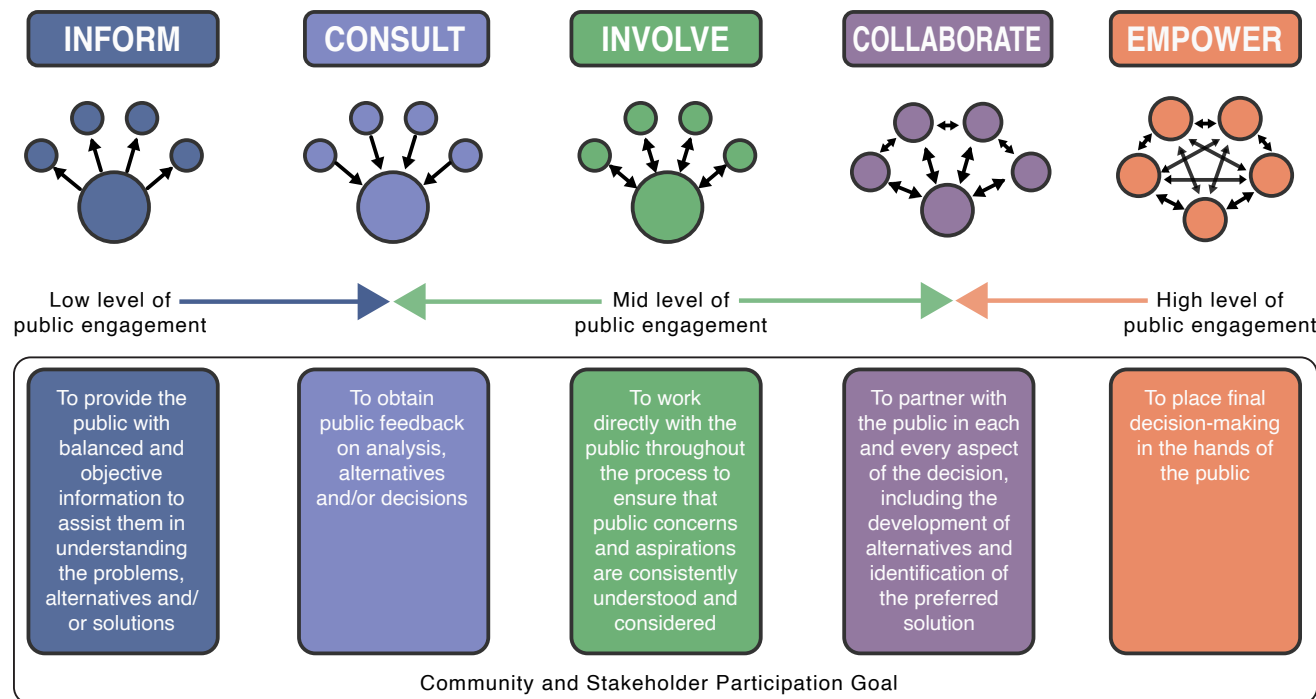


Figure 3: IAP2 Engagement Spectrum, adapted from WAPC 2019

The Focus of this Fact Sheet

This Fact Sheet aims to provide simple direction to any coastal land managers such as local governments, community groups and other coastal stakeholders, to gain enough understanding of how and when the community and stakeholders should be involved during the development of coastal proposals.

The Fact Sheet and accompanying training content and video is also suitable for subject matter experts (consultants) completing coastal adaptation plans, and may also benefit engagement practitioners with the specific challenges of coastal adaptation engagement.

The Fact Sheet presents a number of approaches and variables in designing appropriate engagement for this complex topic, and provides an indication of both the time and resource costs of various approaches.

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Planning for engagement

Planning to deliver engagement is described as an important step in Stage 1 of the CHRMAP Guidelines, which suggests:

- Developing a community and stakeholder engagement strategy (or plan)
- Seeking out a variety of external stakeholder groups
- Undertaking internal engagement
- Providing multiple opportunities, particularly identifying values

When should engagement occur?

Engagement can happen at any of the Stages of the CHRMAP process, and some internal and key stakeholder engagement does typically occur throughout the process.

Broader community and stakeholder engagement most consistently occurs in Stage 1 (Establish the Context), Stage 5 (Risk Treatment), Stage 7+ (when the draft CHRMAP is advertised) and once implementation begins.

The answer to this question is best achieved by developing a Community and Stakeholder Engagement Strategy (or Plan, or other similar name), as described in the CHRMAP Guidelines.

Developing a Community and Stakeholder Engagement Strategy

The Engagement Guide describes a six step process (Figure 4) for designing and delivering engagement and achieving the outcomes described in Stage 1 of the CHRMAP Guidelines.

The first three steps achieve the output 'developing a community and stakeholder engagement strategy'.

Templates for writing the engagement strategy are included in the Engagement Guide. This Fact Sheet aims to provide additional templates that have a greater focus on coastal hazards.

1 Define - What is your proposal?

2 Identify - Who needs to be engaged and why?

3 Design - How are you going to engage?
(*Deliver engagement strategy*)

4 Implement - Put your engagement
strategy into action

5 Review and Analyse - What did the community
engagement tell you? (*Deliver engagement report*)

6 Reflection and Feedback - What effect or
change occurred because of engagement?

Figure 4: Best Practice Engagement Guide Steps
(adapted from WAPC)

1 Define - What is your proposal?

The Engagement Guide was written to be used across variable types of urban planning project. For CHRMAP projects, the answer to this question is more clear (the CHRMAP or other coastal plan).

However, this step is important in framing what engagement may be required. A simple first step is to ask key questions to begin to understand the context of engaging for this type of plan:

- What is the likely hazard impact (i.e. where will it be experienced spatially)?
- Who is likely to be impacted by the decisions?
- Who are the communities in the area?
- What is the local socio-political context?
- What strategic or regional planning change is anticipated?
- What environmental or heritage constraints exist?
- What capacity does the local community have – knowledge, expertise, experience?
- What existing exposure do the community have to coastal adaptation?

These questions can help to determine any risks to the engagement process, such as existing distrust of the system or local governance processes, misinformation about climate change matters, or other community controversies or hot topics.

This Step can help define the objectives of your engagement process and supports development of the [Stage 1 - Establish the Context](#) reporting.

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2 Identify - Who needs to be engaged and why?

For a CHRMAP (or similar), who needs to be engaged can include:

- People with direct financial, spatial or social impact (often described as Communities of Place).
- Those with an interest such as tourists, scientists, engineers, researchers, and those with influence, such as decision makers at local, state and Commonwealth level, and includes local Councillors (Communities of Interest).

A formal stakeholder database is recommended. This should be developed if there is no existing internal stakeholder database or customer relationship management system, or be prepared for the project.

Mapping of stakeholders should include:

- Identification (names) of the stakeholder and their likely 'expectation' for engagement in the project;
- Identification (names) of key community champions and community groups in the area;
- Mapping of the communication channels (e.g. social media, print media, E-news, signage) that are commonly used to communicate with them; and
- Other requirements such as language barriers, cultural concerns, cost and time barriers.

A stakeholder's likely expectation for being engaged often comes down to three key elements:

- Interest – in the project. High, Medium and Low (H, M, L).
- Impact - the project is likely to have on the stakeholder (H, M, L).
- Influence - capacity to influence the outcomes of the project (H, M, L).

Once these are considered, stakeholders should be categorised to help identify how much effort should be applied to engage the stakeholder, based on their unique relationship with the project.

Important stakeholders to consider in coastal adaptation planning include:

- Traditional Owners and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders, recognising that various groups may exist in the study area.
- Community organisations that are local, such as Surf Life Saving Clubs, coast care groups, fishing clubs, swimming schools, four-wheel drive clubs.
- Organisation that represent community organisations, such as Surf Life Saving WA, RecFishWest, Fishability WA etc.
- Young people who represent the most impacted people in the community in the long term.
- Culturally and Linguistically Diverse Communities that may have lower capacity for engagement but can be a large demographic group in the study area.
- Service and Government authorities with affected assets.

Coastal managers such as Local Governments also often have advisory groups such as youth, disability, Aboriginal, environment and sustainability and arts and culture groups that will also be interested or impacted by coastal adaptation plans.

It is important to also look within the organisation to internal stakeholders who will need to be responsible for delivering the outcomes of plans or will interact with the community once plans are publicly released.

Internal stakeholders may also be involved in communication and engagement activities for other projects at the same time as the coastal adaptation engagement occurs. This is important to identify early, and plan for.

Directly affected properties often form the bulk of the high (H) interest, high (H) impact and high (H) influence stakeholders that will be identified, although each study area will have unique and different needs.

A Context and Stakeholder Analysis³ template with questions to help identify coastal stakeholders (Microsoft Word) and an example Stakeholder Assessment Database³ template with prompts to suggest various approaches (Microsoft Excel) is available to download to help with Step 1 and Step 2.



³ Available with the Training Module resources - <https://www.wa.gov.au/government/document-collections/coastwa-training-series>

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3 Design - How are you going to engage? (Deliver engagement strategy)

The design of your engagement for coastal adaptation planning, like other forms of engagement, will be influenced by the Define and Identify Steps of the Engagement Guide, as well as considerations such as your time and cost limits.

For CHRMAP projects, engagement is specifically recommended in Stage 1 - Establish the Context to 'identify and define the values of assets..., to determine the consequence and tolerability of risks... to assess the acceptability of risk treatment options'

However, the intensiveness of engagement in Stage 1 can be highly variable. Whether to engage in a more minimal way to identify values or more extensively early in the CHRMAP/plan process about expected hazards may rely on the identification of specific challenges expected in the study area, including:

- How urgent hazard adaptation is.
- How many individuals may be impacted.
- How strongly the community is already involved.
- Other socio-political factors such as trust and misinformation.

Figure 5 illustrates one way of considering these factors in relation to your study area.

A more imminent risk is likely to necessitate a more extensive effort in the early stages of a CHRMAP. This is also true of CHRMAP review and other coastal plans that are likely to suggest imminent responses.

In these cases, stakeholders require information as soon as possible.

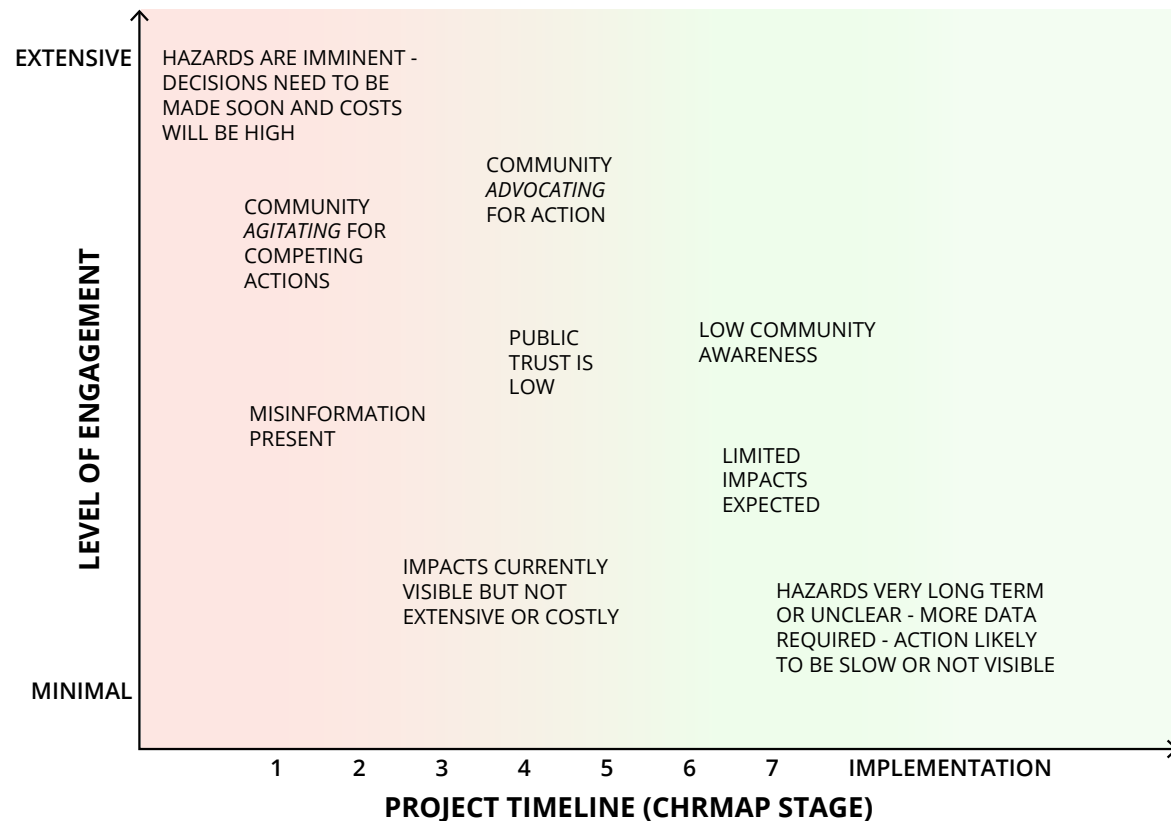


Figure 5: Level of Engagement / Timing of Engagement Efforts

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Stakeholders may also require greater levels of control over outcomes if responses are imminent, as there are likely to be social, environmental, infrastructure and economic implications to decisions, which will be borne in some ways by those stakeholders.

In this case, engaging more extensively early in the process can have a direct cost benefit to the project. Figure 6 illustrates the way that a stakeholder's ability to influence outcomes reduces over time as plans become more set; and conversely how the cost of changing plans can be high if stakeholders demand to be more influential.

In both Figure 5 and Figure 6, the red shaded area (darker) illustrates an area of high risk for the engagement process where careful planning should be applied.

Engagement methods that may be used, in approximate order of cost/time/intensity, are:

- Printed materials, media releases, signs on site and social media advising of the project.
- Project website - basic information sharing all the way through to highly interactive.
- Webinars, walking tours, interviews.
- Polls, surveys, school sessions, drop-in sessions.
- Direct mail to all affected properties.
- Interactive mapping tools showing hazard lines and boundaries, highly interactive.
- Focus groups, public meetings, workshops.
- Models, education programs (wave tanks etc).
- Citizen science programs supporting monitoring etc.

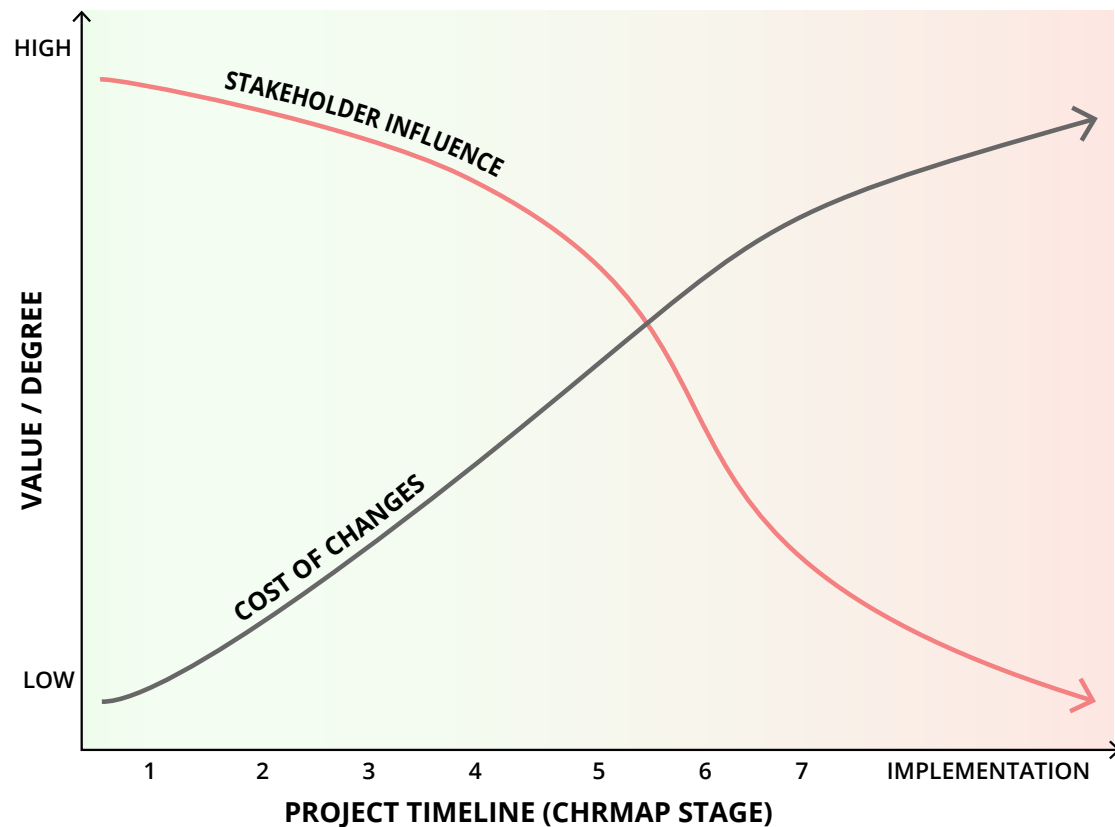


Figure 6: Engagement Influence / Cost of Rework

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In addition to all of the above methods, and many more tools, it is recommended that formal project steering committees are formed for any major coastal project. The complexity of technical information being provided suggests at a minimum that a steering committee include engineers/coastal engineers, planning and community development personnel. Most steering committees also include DPLH and the Department of Transport and Major Infrastructure (DTMI).

For Local Government projects, it is also recommended that one to two Elected Members be included in the steering committee, to help guide the broader Elected Member group. A steering committee should also include any other stakeholder with major assets in the study area (such as Water Corporation assets or wetlands of significance).

Engagement should also allow for regular briefings or workshops of internal staff and the full Council.

How to select the right engagement methods

A Matrix of Engagement Methods⁴, which reflects coastal adaptation planning specific methods is available to download to help with this Step. The matrix indicates potential cost, way of delivering (in-person/online), the IAP2 engagement level, the CHRMAP Stage where it might be most relevant, the level of resourcing required and the most suitable stakeholder. Case study examples are also referenced.

For projects that are expected to be complex, expert engagement support may be required.

Figure 7 illustrates the types of methods that are expected as a minimum, and the methods that may enhance engagement if required, and when they would be most suited.

MINIMUM EXPECTATIONS

Stage 1 - Establish the Context

- Establish a Steering Committee
- Prepare a Communications and Engagement Plan
- Values Engagement

Stage 2 - 4 - Risk and Vulnerability

- Steering Committee Meetings
- Internal stakeholder briefings
- Council Briefings

Stage 5 - Risk Treatment

- Steering Committee Meetings
- Internal stakeholder briefings
- Council Briefings

Stage 6 & Beyond - Implementation

- Steering Committee Meetings
- Internal stakeholder briefings
- Council Briefings and decision making
- Public Advertising

BEST PRACTICE WHERE NECESSARY

Could include early liaison with key stakeholder groups to create awareness of CHRMAP preparation and encourage participation, surveys to gather community values, mapping, public meetings and information sharing

Could include ongoing stakeholder and user group meetings, community events, publicised hazard mapping, workshops and more information sessions/ Frequently Asked Question updates

Could include workshops and meetings regarding adaptation pathways, multi-criteria assessment. May be complex but suited to challenging scenarios

Could include public deliberation on draft CHRMAP, ongoing reference or focus groups, project websites, citizen science programs

Figure 7: Minimum Standard and Best Practice (when necessary)

⁴ Available with the Training Module resources - <https://www.wa.gov.au/government/document-collections/coastwa-training-series>

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4 Implement - Put your engagement strategy into action

Implementing engagement for coastal adaptation requires constant monitoring of social and other media, and a willingness to modify the process if challenges arise. Be careful of topics such as;

- Predictions versus perceptions
- Who pays and expectations that cost is the responsibility of 'others'
- Impacting culture and heritage
- Climate change and blame
- Myths and misconceptions
- Misinformation and social media
- Shock and outrage management

There is a significant amount of supporting material to help with this in previous training modules.

In addition, ensuring that communication is clear, with regularly updated Frequently Asked Questions, project updates and quick engagement reporting helps to mitigate some elements of concern.

A number of additional tools are available to download to help with the engagement delivery. These include templates for typical Frequently Asked Questions, a Plain Language Guide, and a typical survey⁵.

There is also information for download that might help plan and deliver drop-in sessions⁵ at any stage in the project and a simple workshop/community information session agenda⁵ suited to engaging in Stage 1 to share information about the project.

These are in addition to the survey tools available supporting the CHRMAP Guidelines, which include more detailed surveys that allow for discrete choice experiments: a stated preference approach that estimates in more detail how individuals make tradeoffs between different options (found [here](#)).

Also available for download is an example workshop agenda/run sheet⁵ that can be used if seeking to engage the community more extensively in assessing adaptation options during **Stage 5 - Risk Evaluation**.

This illustrates one way of completing the multicriteria analysis process in collaboration with the community, which is a complex process, but effective at ensuring community involvement, ownership, and calibration of subject matter expert assessment.

The agenda references an example where significant risks were present, and represents an extensive time and cost commitment. Community driven multicriteria analysis processes have been completed in examples at varying scales with the City of Mandurah, Shire of Gingin, City of Albany, and for the Capel to Leschenault CHRMAPs.

Tips for limited budgets

- Consider allowing more time for the whole project so that more organic distribution of information has time to reach different stakeholder cohorts.
- Piggyback on other events and activities that are already budgeted (without creating confusion or distracting from either engagement process).
- Use past successful methods and relationships already developed through internal teams where possible.



Image 1: Community Panel at work on Multi-Criteria Assessment of Adaptation Options

⁵ Available with the Training Module resources - <https://www.wa.gov.au/government/document-collections/coastwa-training-series>

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5 Review and Analyse - What did the community engagement tell you? *(Deliver engagement report)*

It is vital to keep stakeholders informed of engagement outcomes if they have volunteered their time to support your project.

Preparing an engagement summary is typical for any engagement project. For coastal projects, which tend to run over long periods, there may be a need to prepare summaries at multiple points so that feedback can be provided to the community.

A summary may be iterative, with new chapters added for each engagement activity over the life of the project. In CHRMAP projects it is common for engagement summaries to run over many hundreds of pages with attachments including verbatim comments. An overall summary of engagement with the high level outcomes may be necessary to provide a more concise report for readers.

Good examples exist where coastal managers have retained engagement feedback over many years of the coastal journey, clearly providing the community with evidence of effort and the authentic intent to engage, and retaining coastal project specific landing pages on website for any stakeholder enquirer.

Templates for writing the engagement summary are included in the Engagement Guide.

Engagement summaries should be made public. For this reason, names and details should be carefully managed or redacted if necessary.

6 Reflection and Feedback - What effect or change occurred because of engagement?

In addition to providing engagement summaries to participants in engagement processes at the relevant Stages, it is also important to keep general communication ongoing when engagement is not being undertaken (i.e. when there are large gaps in engagement activities during the project or beyond the project).

A void of information is often filled with assumptions and hearsay, which may be hard to dispel at a later date, making future coastal adaptation planning more complex.

Some of the most controversial issues in coastal management have arisen due to delays in engagement and the inevitable change in community members between last and next communication (e.g. the report being advertised).

Coastal adaptation planning is very long term, so regular communication keeps the topic at the front of mind even when obvious physical changes are not evident. Once a coastal plan is commenced, stakeholders should be invited to register interest for project updates (using a simple or free survey tool at a minimum), and thereafter they should be regularly informed of progress.

This Fact Sheet provides a tool to download that suggests evaluation metrics⁶ that might be used in engagement projects. Regular project updates should be concise; even if there is nothing to report, that is something to report!

Summary

CHRMAP engagement requires a careful and considered approach. It should fit the local circumstances and respond to the local community's needs and preferred engagement channels.

Notwithstanding, beyond the inputs required for coastal adaptation planning from stakeholders, engagement is a powerful tool for knowledge sharing, education and capacity building in the community. Some coastal hazards present fairly significant consequences to a community, and stakeholders have the right to be well informed and involved in decisions that may ultimately and extensively affect them.

The community is likely to outlast the coastal managers and for this reason they are one of the most substantial resources available to the coastal hazard management and adaptation task.

Resources

A number of resources have been mentioned in this Fact Sheet. These are all generic; all templates and guides should be modified for your own unique circumstances.

It is strongly encouraged that experienced personnel complete engagement for projects that are expected to be highly contentious. In the absence of internal resources in your own organisation, external expertise may be required. DPLH, DTMI and WALGA can provide support to identify resources in these cases.

Case studies are provided in the Matrix of Engagement Methods and in various training modules, in particular, the engagement module.

⁶ Available with the Training Module resources - <https://www.wa.gov.au/government/document-collections/coastwa-training-series>