STATE PLANNING COMMISSION

Agenda Report for Decision

Meeting Date: 9 June 2022

Item Name	Engagement Approach for Regional Plans
Presenters	Brett Steiner and Tom Victory
Purpose of Report	Decision
Item Number	5.5
Strategic Plan Reference	1. Planning for Regional South Australia
Work Plan Reference	1.1 Lead the development of Regional Plans
Confidentiality	Not Confidential (Release Immediately)
Related Decisions	12 May 2022 – Workshop No. 2 – Engagement Approach for Country Plans

Recommendation

It is recommended that the State Planning Commission (the Commission) resolves to:

1. Approve the designation of this item as Not Confidential (Release Immediately).

2. Approve the adoption of the Engagement Approach for Regional Plans, which will inform the preparation of Engagement Plans for each Planning Region (**Attachments 1** and **2**).

Background

This report seeks the Commission's approval of the Engagement Approach for Regional Planning Program – specifically:

- **Attachment 1** comprises the Background Report to the Engagement Approach, including discussion centred on scope and methodology.

- **Attachment 2** comprises the recommended Engagement Approach for Regional Plans. The Engagement Approach was the topic of a Commission workshop on 12 May 2022.

Discussion

Engagement Approach for Regional Plans

To inform and develop the engagement approach, a range of engagement activities were undertaken with key stakeholders, including the Local Government Regional Planning Committee (LGRPC), to draw on their expertise, experiences and suggestions to implement an engagement strategy for Regional Plans, which is wholly consistent with the Principles of the Community Engagement Charter.

The LGRPC indicated that regional councils had a strong desire to work with Planning and Lnad Use Services (PLUS) and the Commission in a partnership approach. This would involve mutual signoff at key steps in the process and shared delivery of the engagement approach, as well as shared resourcing towards the planning and delivery of engagement. The level of shared resourcing would vary and be dependent on individual council resourcing and capacity; therefore, this 'partnership' will differ in terms of participation and support for engagement across each region.

It is recommended that the Commission support the regions adopting the role of 'partner'. PLUS staff would work with each regional grouping of councils to develop engagement plans for each region and seek the endorsement of each council representative of the plan prior to consideration by the Commission.

Another focus of the approach is to utilise the Regional Planning process to build ongoing relationships. This is in recognition that there is a fundamental shift in approach to strategic planning, where regional plans are more responsive to change over time. This relies on establishing long-term relationships with people in the regions that can help shape its vision and influence outcomes. A key recommendation is to use engagement techniques that deliver deep and meaningful engagement with those people that are influencers in the region.

The bespoke approach to each planning region, and community and engagement techniques utilised, are subject to the approval of the Regional Planning budget.

Furthermore, a range of tactics and tools have been identified and their alignment with IAP2 participation spectrum determined. This toolkit can be utilised as required to suit the stakeholder, context, and purpose of engagement.

The high-level Engagement Approach proposes 12 recommendations, which are contained in the Summary Report for the Regional Plans Delivery Project (**Attachment 2**). A number of these are concerned with practices which would be undertaken as matter of course (i.e. 'Community Engagement Plan Template within the Community Engagement Charter be used'). Of particular significance is Recommendation 3, which specifies the Commission support the regions adopting the role of 'partner' even in the instance of limited resources to support delivery. The partnership framework and approach would be further defined and tailored during preparation of the Engagement Plans.

Four Phases of Engagement

Four key phases to engagement are recommended:

1. Preparation of Engagement Plan
2. Vision and Priorities
3. Consult on a draft Regional Plan
4. Communicate 'Final Plan' and iterative review processes.

A recommendation of the Engagement Approach is the adoption of this structure moving forwards, which aligns with PLUS current understanding of the process.

Attachments:

1. Background Report for Engagement Approach – Prepared by URPS, 30 May 2022 (#18758789).

2. Summary Report – Regional Plans Delivery Project: Engagement Approach – prepared by URPS, March 2022 (#18758780).

Prepared by:	Nick Kretschmer
Endorsed by:	Brett Steiner
Date:	3 June 2022

Engagement Approach for Regional Plans

Background Report

Prepared for the Planning and Land Use Services Division of the Department of Trade and Investment.

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Engagement Approach for Regional Plans

30 May 2022

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URPS Ref	Draft Report to PLUS - Engagement Regional Planning 18.05.2022

Document history and status

Revision	Date	Author	Reviewed	Details
V1	27.5.22	A. Allen	N. Halsey	Initiation of report

⊙ URPS

Contents

1. Introduction and Purpose

1.1 Scope of work

URPS has been engaged by the Planning and Land Use Services Division of the Department of Trade and Investment (referred to as PLUS in this report) to develop an engagement approach for the preparation of six Regional Plans for the following regions:

- Limestone Coast (7 Council)
- Eyre Peninsula (11 Councils)
- Murray Mallee (8 Councils)
- Yorke and Mid North (11 Councils)
- Kangaroo Island (1 Council)
- Far North and Western Region (4 Councils, OCA and Aboriginal Lands).

The scope is to develop an overall engagement approach that can be reflected in individual engagement plans to be prepared for each region. Fundamental to the design of the approach, is the Community Engagement Charter, which is a legislated component of the new planning and development system.

This report has been prepared to provide the rational for the Engagement Approach for Regional Plans. It summarises the investigations and engagement undertaken to develop the Approach.

1.2 Purpose of a Regional Plan

Regional Plans are an important part of South Australia's planning system and must be consistent with State Planning Policies, which set out the high-level vision for South Australia. The *Planning, Development and Infrastructure Act 2016* (the PDI Act), sets out some fundamental requirements for these plans, which:

must include:

- A long-term vision of 15 to 30 years including provisions about the integration of land use, transport infrastructure and the public realm
- Maps and plans describing spatial patterns
- Contextual information - forward projections, statistical data and analysis
- Frameworks for the public realm and infrastructure
- Recommendations about the application and operation of the Planning and Design Code.

and may:

- Include structure plans, masterplans and concept plans
- Be divided into sub-regions.

The core role of a Regional Plan is to determine how growth will be managed. It needs to be numerically precise, spatially specific and provide guidance about the future form of development.

The Regional Plans will have statutory weight in decisions relating to rezonings and in some cases the assessment of Impact Assessed development proposals. They will also inform future investment decisions in community services and infrastructure.

To ensure these plans are implemented, it will be important to gain support from state agencies, Minister's, Councils and regional bodies that can each play a role in developing positive outcomes for these regions.

Given the impact on land value that can arise from these processes, good probity and governance is critical. These plans must hold up to intense public scrutiny if required.

1.3 The role of the Community Engagement Charter

The Community Engagement Charter (the Charter) was introduced under the *Planning, Development and Infrastructure Act 2016* (the PDI Act) to improve faith in the planning and development system. The fundamental premise was that the community should help shape the strategic vision and future policy directions for their local area.

Given the statutory role of Regional Plans, the PDI Act requires that the Charter must be used to guide public participation in the preparation and amendment of these planning instruments.

"The charter means there is no one-size-fits all approach to engagement. Each engagement requires careful planning and an understanding of stakeholder and community interests"

The Charter sets out five Principles of Engagement:

1. Engagement is Genuine

   All parties are genuine and honest in their participation. Those conducting the engagement use their best endeavours to proactively seek participation of communities and genuinely listen to and understand the range of views. Those participating are open to a range of perspectives and are well informed. Participants respect that their views may not prevail

2. Engagement is inclusive and respectful

   Affected and interested people can have their say and be heard, regardless of background or status. People are invited/encouraged to participate early so that they can influence the process and the thinking from the start. All views are acknowledged and considered.

3. Engagement is fit for purpose

   The process matches the significance of the planning change. It is value-for-money, targeted, flexible, scalable and timely. Innovative forms of technology-based public engagement are considered where appropriate.

4. Engagement is informed and transparent

People have access to all relevant information at the time it is needed so that they can participate fully. They understand what is happening, why it is happening, what the consequences are and what they can and cannot influence. When decisions are made, the reasons behind them are explained. [Technology-based engagement products can be used to provide digital feedback and assist evidence-based reporting].

5. Engagement process is reviewed and improved.

After each engagement exercise, the process is reviewed to see whether the principles have been met and what can be done to improve the process next time.

Councils, the State Planning Commission and other entities altering statutory instruments must design engagement strategies that meet these principles of the Charter and tailor engagement to the needs of the community and the characteristics of the project. The Charter makes sure that input into policies is gathered early and more widely from stakeholders and communities.

The Community Engagement Toolkit on the PlanSA Portal was developed to help practitioners fulfil their engagement obligations when preparing or amending a designated instrument. It provides a step-by-step guide, together with a range of templates, case studies and examples to help develop the best engagement approach for different types of projects. This Toolkit remains valuable and provides the foundation for the engagement approach recommended here.

1.3.1   What does this mean for our engagement approach?

Within the context of the Charter, this Engagement Approach:

- Provides overall guidance about how activities are planned and undertaken
- Requires a unique approach to each engagement that is consistent with the Charter Principles
- Acknowledges there are a range of tools and tactics that have been successful
- Learns from previous engagements
- Recognises that measuring our success is fundamental to the overall approach.

Given the above, our methodology has sought to take the learnings from:

- Interstate jurisdictions that have undertaken similar projects
- Local engagement professionals that operate in rural South Australia
- Professionals from the regions themselves who know their local areas
- Strategic planning practitioners that have undertaken similar engagement activities within South Australia.

2. Why Engage?

Community engagement is a fundamental part of the democratic process and enables people to participate in decisions that impact on their daily lives. Constructive relationships between the community and Government lead to better decision-making. Well-constructed engagement can provide the government and decision-makers with a better understanding of the communities' needs and aspirations which is important for long term success.

With the review of the planning system in 2014, many participants sought better engagement, expressing the desire for their voices to be genuinely heard in the planning system. Many people's first interaction with the planning system is when a new house or other form of development is built near them, without understanding the planning policy that enabled this to occur.

The Community Engagement Charter therefore supports engaging the community in the policy setting stage, acknowledging the need for certainty at the development application stage.

3. Developing an Engagement Approach

The proposed engagement approach to support the preparation of Regional Plans has been developed with input from a range of professionals through structured engagement activities and informal conversations.

3.1 Methodology

The methodology included informal and formal discussions to contribute learnings and ideas into the process and iteratively develop the proposed engagement approach. We asked people about their previous experiences in relation to community engagement, including what worked well, what hadn't, and ideas for the regional planning process. Once a set of preliminary ideas were prepared, they were tested by our Challenge Group (as described in Table 1 below). Key insights were incorporated into the draft high level approach and further discussed tested with PLUS, the State Planning Commission and Local Government Regional Planning Committee.
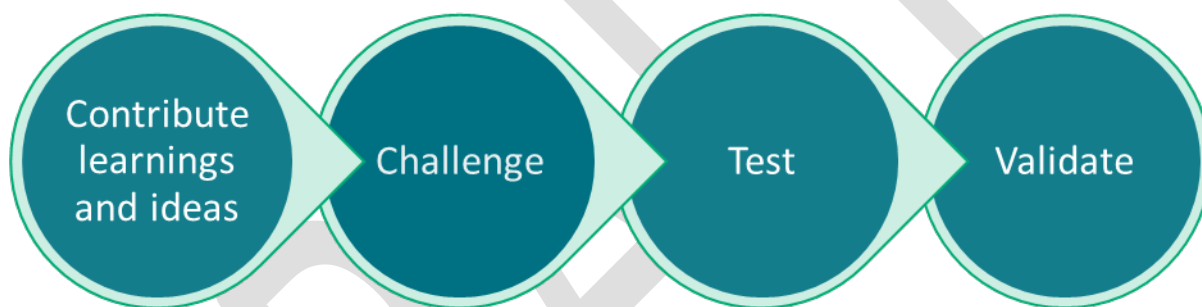

Table 1 – Methodology Summary

Engagement Activity	Purpose
URPS Think Tank	To draw on the extensive experience and insights of our broader team of planning and engagement specialists who work across the State in land use planning, development assessment, strategy, policy and engagement.
Challenge Group	To draw on the insights and expertise of other engagement practitioners that are experts in their field and deliver services across the State from organisations such as Department for Infrastructure and Transport, SA Water and Upper Spencer Gulf Cities . To challenge us and test and validate our ideas for engagement.
Workshop with PLUS	To draw together information gathered in early tasks with our own experience and knowledge regarding the opportunities to deliver the engagement approach to stimulate thinking and discussion

Engagement Activity	Purpose
Local Government Regional Planning Committee	To talk to representatives of Councils to test our ideas and identify what successful engagement might look like
Workshop with State Planning Commission	To continue to test and refine the proposed engagement approach that had been iteratively developed via the above activities

3.2   What we heard

The discussions with practitioners who were involved with similar projects locally and interstate identified key learnings and opportunities for successful engagement with the regions. This included ensuring the right people are in the room, emphasis on the importance of early engagement and acknowledgement of the differing conversations with community including education versus technical. Further to this, leading local professionals that participated in our Challenge Group provided insights regarding roles in the delivery of the regional plan, communication tools and how to reach the hard-to-reach voices. The workshop with the Local Government Regional Planning Committee provided further insight and direction regarding the opportunities and role the regions might play in the engagement planning and delivery. A high-level summary of these discussions can be found in Appendix A.

The early conversations with PLUS illustrated the importance of engagement to the successful delivery of the regional plan program. There were a range of challenges identified, including limitations on resourcing, the challenge of travel distances, achieving a level of consistency while also allowing for 'bespoke' engagement, engaging with the silent majority, creating understanding about 'what's in it for me', and commencing genuine engagement about planning related matters with First Nation's People.

When asked what success looks like, participants frequently referred to the desire for 'shared ownership' of Regional Plans and that the engagement was genuine and authentic, valued and beneficial. There was a view that this engagement was an opportunity to foster positive longer term working relationships with the regions and to build trust.

Some key themes that emerged through the discussion are summarised below.

3.2.1   Depth Versus Reach

The depth versus reach paradigm was a fundamental part of the discussion at all engagement activities described at section 3.1. The benefit of reaching a vast number of people is that people are aware of the project - a good thing. However, if there are not adequate resources in place to have a meaningful interaction with those reached, the benefits may not flow onto a positive and mutually beneficial interaction. The tactics to support reach need to be carefully considered, and the resource implications of achieving it, available as needed.

Achieving depth, which can be characterised by a more meaningful and rich dialogue, is difficult to achieve on a broad scale. Many of the participants had experienced large numbers attending a public forum where communities are outraged by a proposal, but this has not always led to a meaningful dialogue that understands the detail of the issues for individuals and how they may be addressed.

At the workshops, we explored whether depth and reach are in fact mutually exclusive. It was recognised that reach was important to make sure that people 'knew about the process' and could participate if they wanted to. The number of people that then decided to participate was not necessarily an indication of success. Depth was seen to be crucial for those within the region that could not only shape the plan, but also support its delivery in the longer term. There was significant discussion about who were the 'right people' to engage at this deeper level.

Some learnings identified included:

- Important to reach people who don't represent a particular interest but can participate in informed deliberation
- Community forums and drop-in sessions are not always getting high attendance
- There is benefit in multiple channels for engagement
- Targeted, smaller scale events, surveys, and meetings that all connect into a larger project or issues can be effective

Depth and **Reach** were consistent themes throughout the engagement process on the approach. We define these in the following ways:

Reach

Reach means getting to more people.

Reach is important to enable people to be aware of the process and the opportunity to participate. It results in an engagement process that is accessible for many.

Depth

Depth means working with participants to make sure they understand the detail and underlying information fully.

Depth increases the meaningfulness of participants' contribution. It results in quality, well considered feedback and intelligence being received.

It was generally agreed that the number of people that participate may be less important than having the 'right people' involved from the beginning.

3.2.2 Ownership and scope of influence

The question of ownership of the Plans was commonly raised. However, it was acknowledged that there was a high level of 'trust' required for the regions to 'own' the Plans with the State Planning Commission and Government.

While a positive ambition, care needs to be taken in using this rhetoric too early in the process, and before a level of trust has been achieved.

Ownership of the Plans can only be achieved when the engagement is genuine, inclusive and respectful.

In some regards, the legislation makes creating ownership difficult, with the decision-making authority being the State Planning Commission, and Minister for Planning. There is a power 'imbalance' inherently in the legislative process. The regions are 'participants', but the Minister and State Planning Commission are 'decision makers'.

Therefore, the key to empowerment will lie on the genuine approach to engagement and taking a flexible approach to the delivery of the 'perfect plan'.

3.2.3   Education and temporal nature of engagement

The regional planning process is evolutionary. Not only is the process an opportunity to educate the community, thereby empowering them and growing their capacity to contribute to planning related matters, but also provides a way of fostering longer-term relationships. For some parts of the community, including for First Nations People, it may be the first step in a longer-term engagement process.

In this way, the process of developing the Regional Plans is almost seen as a priority over what the final plans might look like. This is in part because due to the view that Regional Plans are evolutionary, 'living' and require an ongoing process of refinement. In this context it makes sense that there is a need for an ongoing narrative or story that encourages people to participate. People need to understand what a Regional Plan is and how it can affect them and how it may evolve overtime.

3.2.4   Speaking in a way communities understand

Communities' can be disengaged when material is overly technical and difficult to understand. We often think we are writing in Plain English but the content does not resonate with the general public.

It was also noted that to genuinely engage people they needed to know 'what's in it for them'. The point was made that people have extremely busy lives. Getting people to participate in a strategic planning exercise is therefore challenging.

Locally specific examples can certainly help. Assisting communities to understand what was in the previous Regional Plan and what was the result (eg the Plan envisaged growth in renewable energy and there was a significant spike in wind farm and solar farm development proposals as a result) may be one way to help people see why they should get involved.

The point was frequently made, that while we often hear from communities about their vision for the future, the language is often 'sanitised' and put into 'planning speak' when incorporated into official plans or strategies. It was considered important that the words the community use to explain their vision for the future, are applied in the final strategy – it is important that they can see 'their voice' reflected.

"The authors of the Regional Plan should hear direct from the community and reflect the Region's words in the final plan"

3.2.5 *The role of the Regions in delivering engagement*

One of the most significant discussions was around the role of regions in delivering the Plans. Will they be leaders, partners, facilitators, contributors or observers? In most cases, the regions did not feel they could take on the full delivery of the Plan without support from PLUS. It was noted that this could have been established through the delivery of Joint Planning Boards, however Councils did not have the resources to establish such a heavy governance structure.

It was acknowledged that there may be times through the process where Councils move along this spectrum. For example, some may provide leadership in the early stages of engagement to generate interest in the community, but may be contributors later in the process. The engagement approach will therefore need flexibility to enable them to acknowledge that Councils may want to play these different roles.

The discussions with the Local Government Regional Planning Committee suggested that the engagement for regions will be influenced by factors such as:

- **Relationships** – quality of relationships with Government, the State Planning Commission, PLUS, local community or other stakeholders

- **Capacity** – what personnel and funding resources are available

- **Vision** – whether they have a strong vision for their area that they want reflected in the Regional Plan

- **Role** – the nature of the delivery role – ie do they want to be in the driver's seat?

- **Level of Engagement** – some Councils and regions are highly engaged and have a history of strategic engagement with their community around strategic planning issues. This will impact on the anticipated level of engagement from the Council, their community and stakeholders.

The discussion also unpacked the skills, knowledge and expertise within PLUS and the regions and how this might be used to deliver a Regional Plan (refer Table 2):

Table 2 Possible roles of PLUS and the Regions

PLUS	REGIONS
Access to data and information, such as population, demographics, development trends	Provide local knowledge of what's happening/what's important to their region.
Skills, knowledge and expertise to analyse data and information and represent it visually in maps and graphics	Provide any outcomes from recent engagements with stakeholders and the community.
Capacity to develop engagement strategies for each region in consultation with the relevant region	Use connections and networks-help to identify 'the right people'

PLUS	REGIONS
Resources (people and other) to support rollout of the engagement	Some regions may have the capacity to contribute resources to support engagement activities (eg attend events, distribute material, provide venues etc).
Secondment/embed staff member to support the engagement and work with region to prepare the Plan. Alternatively, provide a 'case manager' approach for each region.	Provide information that contributes to the preparation of the Regional Plan.

3.2.6   Resourcing constraints

Resourcing constraints were identified as one of the limitations of any engagement approach. This is to some extent reflected in the Charter, which requires that engagement is 'fit for purpose'.

The Charter states that the process should match the significance of the planning change and that it is value-for-money, targeted, flexible, scalable and timely. Innovative forms of technology-based public engagement should be considered where appropriate.

Resourcing constraints will need to be understood upfront to enable expectations to be managed. No program has an endless bucket of money to deliver engagement outcomes. However, carefully considering the right engagement tactics early, based on an understanding of the community can have significant cost savings overall.

3.2.7   Timing and location of Engagement

Discussions with inter-state colleagues in Queensland and Victoria highlighted the importance of engaging communities early in the process.

Other learnings include:

- Consider what is happening in the community eg harvest, Christmas, school holidays, local events

- Go to the community – go where the people are (i.e. markets and community events)

3.2.8   Engagement tools

There are a range of engagement tools that have been tried and tested. Depending on the level of engagement, different tools can be used. Interstate examples of engagements for the preparation of regional plans or their equivalent faced similar challenges to South Australia.

In the context of the depth versus reach discussion above, it was generally cited that face to face conversations were necessary when trying to achieve depth. While technology such as Microsoft Teams or Zoom could be used, it was important that there is also face to face engagement with key stakeholders and influencers within the community, particularly when in the regional context.

However, technological solutions such as Facebook that is locationally targeted and online platforms such as Social Pinpoint are also useful for gathering information and obtaining reach.

There was a strong message that the 'road shows' undertaken in the regions during the preparation of the Planning and Design Code did not attract large numbers of participants and were highly resource intensive. It was identified that better outcomes could have been achieved by targeting community leaders and influencers that can play a longer-term role in implementation.

The general public may be more likely to participate in something that did not require them to attend an event eg a survey directly targeted to them. URPS has used business surveys for example as one way of more directly targeting business interests.

In Victoria, the State government held workshops in the regions, but also enabled people to 'MS Teams in' from local libraries. The Councils helped people at the library log on and participate, which meant they didn't all have to drive to one location. People could also log on from home.

Social Pinpoint Case Study

Social pinpoint is an electronic tool which is web enabled. It allows the interested public to identify their views based on spatial or word based information.

Social Pinpoint was used for engagement on intersection upgrades by the Department for Infrastructure and Transport

URPS has recently been working with the Department for Infrastructure and Transport to engage with stakeholders and the community on their experiences along some of Adelaide's most well-known road corridors. These include Cross Road and Portrush Road.

Engagement tool Social Pinpoint was used to gather community feedback. Social Pinpoint allowed participants to 'pin' a comment to a place on a map. Pins were themed as types of experiences – traffic, freight, cycling, place, public transport etc. A wide range of users utilise these intersections. Social Pinpoint made it possible to capture feedback from all users which travel and utilise these intersections and not just a 'catchment area'.

The rich tapestry of data provided the project team an understanding of the fine grain of where things work well and where they could be improved.

Social Pinpoint can include surveys, interactive maps, ideas walls, forum and engagement pages.
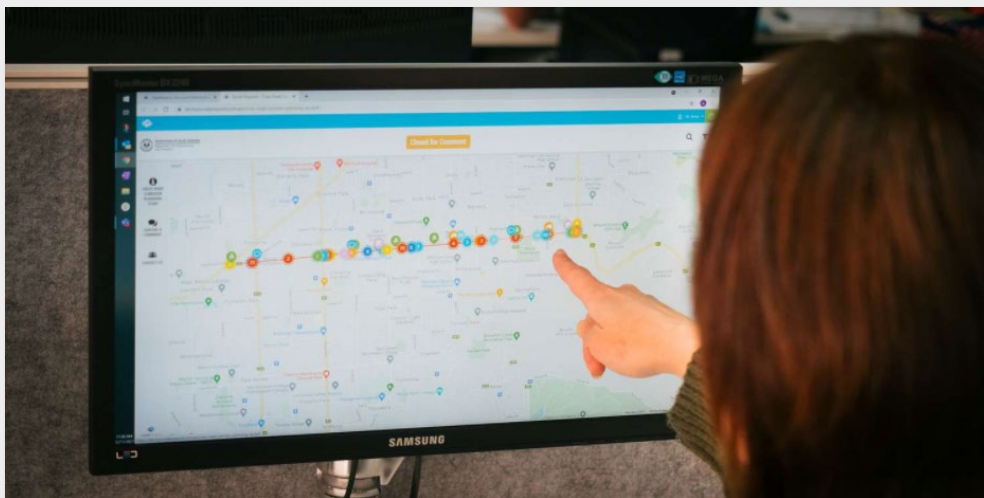
Appendix A – Discussions with local and interstate practitioners

URPS undertook preliminary discussions with practitioners and the regions to understand the importance of engagement within the program, what worked well and opportunities for improvement.

Project	What worked well?	Lessons Learnt	Important to note
South East Queensland Regional Plan	- Early engagement - Multi-faceted approach - Forming reference groups and working groups - Digital tools, radio adverts, tele polls - Multi-faceted approach - Establishing a First Nations Forum that will continue to operate for projects moving forward - Opinion pieces in the media	Youth event to be held in a different setting rather than a forum	- Technical versus community conversations - What is valued by the community - Go where the people are i.e. markets and community events
Climate Change Regional Plans	- Managing expectations and scope of influence - Going to the community versus them coming to you - Councils are well equipped for online meetings - Themed forums	- Getting the right people in the room - Allow for time contingency	- Understanding what is relevant to each region - Ownership and partnerships
Challenge Group	- Targeted social media posts and community pages - Mindful and respectful timing of engagement i.e. not during harvest season	Large involvement of staff can lead to misinterpretation of information	- Authors need to be out in the community to hear the language being used - Respondent numbers aren't always a measure of success

Regional Plans Delivery Project

Engagement Approach

March 2022

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CONTENTS

Purpose and scope

Introduction

Introduction

URPS in association with Emma Pink is pleased to present this work to the Planning Land Use Services Division of the Department of Trade and Investment (PLUS) and State Planning Commission.

Scope

This initial phase of work involved the design of an engagement approach to support the development of Regional Plans that can then be 'rolled out' via more detailed engagement planning and implementation in the future.

This engagement approach has been developed collaboratively with Departmental staff and the State Planning Commission to consider the key foundation pillars (Figure 1).
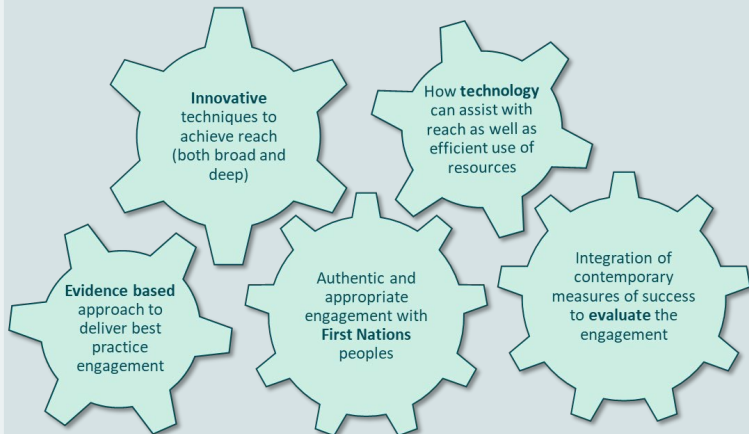

Figure 1 - Foundation pillars for our engagement approach

The Task

To develop an engagement approach to support the preparation of six regional plans, which provide:

- Information about the long-term vision (over a 15-to-30-year period) for the region including land use and infrastructure.

- Contextual information (forward projections and statistical data and analysis).

The six Regional Plans cover the following regions (Figure 2):

- Limestone Coast (7 Council)

- Eyre Peninsula (11 Councils)

- Murray Mallee (8 Councils)

- Yorke and Mid North (11 Councils)

- Kangaroo Island (1 Council)

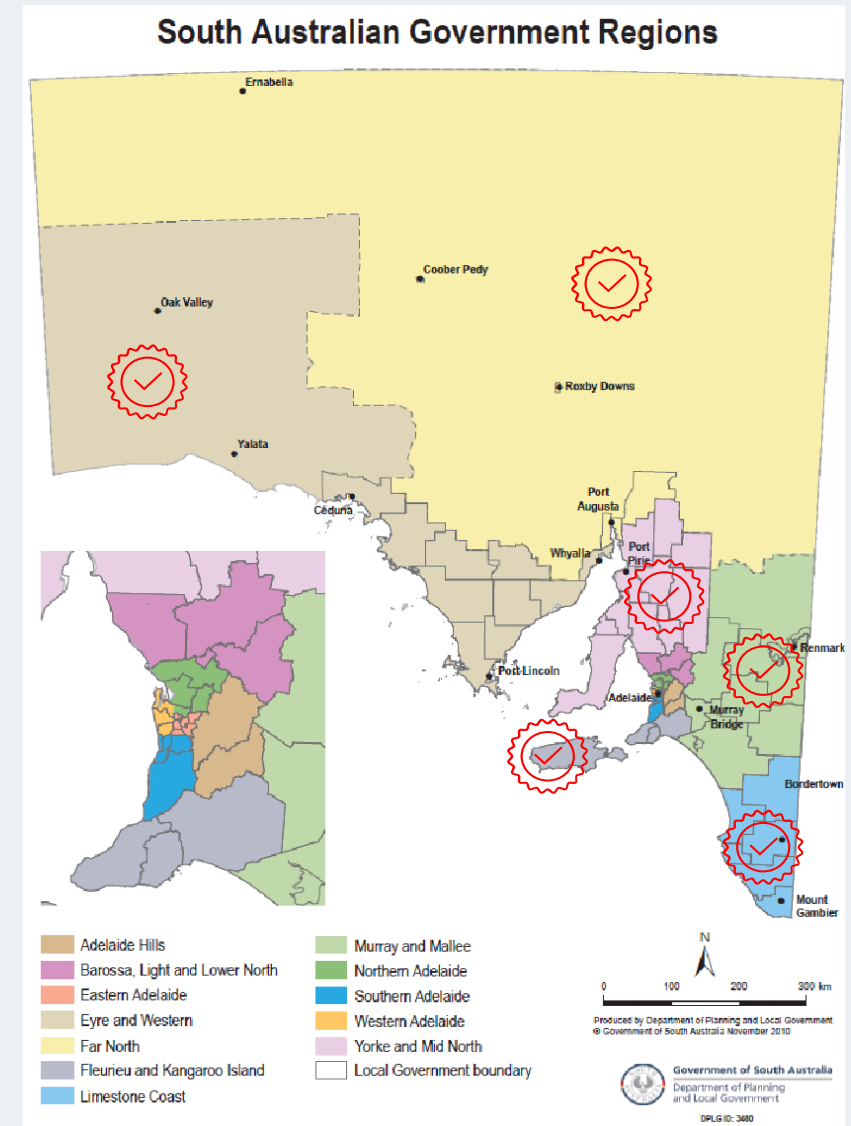- Far North and Western Region (4 Councils, OCA and Aboriginal Lands).

Figure 2 – Regions in-scope of this program

The role of the Community Engagement Charter

Community Engagement Charter

Engagement is a fundamental part of the democratic process and enables people to participate in decisions that impact on their daily lives. Constructive relationships between the community and Government lead to better decision-making. Genuine engagement can provide the government and decision-makers with a better understanding of the communities' needs and aspirations which is important for long term success.

With the review of the planning system in 2014, many participants sought better engagement, expressing the desire for their voices to be genuinely heard. Many people's first interaction with the planning system is when a new house or other form of development is built near them, without understanding the planning policy that enabled this to occur.

The Community Engagement Charter therefore supports engaging the community in the strategy and policy setting stages, acknowledging the need for certainty at the development application stage

How does the Charter Apply to Regional Planning

Regional Plans are statutory instruments under the *Planning, Development and Infrastructure Act 2016.*

The Act requires that the Charter is used to guide public participation in the preparation and amendment of statutory instruments.

The Charter has some core elements that are important to developing any engagement approach:

Principles of Engagement

The Charter sets out five Principles of Engagement.

01	Engagement is genuine
02	Engagement is inclusive and respectful
03	Engagement is fit for purpose
04	Engagement is informed and transparent
05	Engagement processes are reviewed and improved

Performance Measures

Evaluating success is one of the challenges of community engagement.

What it means for an Engagement Approach

Within the context of the Charter, this Engagement Approach:

- Provides overall guidance about how activities are planned and undertaken

- Requires a unique approach to each engagement that is consistent with the Charter Principles

- Acknowledges there are a range of tools and tactics that have been successful

- Learns from previous engagements

- Recognises that measuring our success is fundamental to the overall approach.

"The charter means there is no one-size-fits all approach to engagement. Each engagement requires careful planning and an understanding of stakeholder and community interests"

Developing the Approach

Developing the Approach

Overview

Our approach was iterative as the thinking developed and evolved, and was refined through a series of discussions with Thinkers, Department staff and the State Planning Commission. We used co-design approaches and interactive workshops to hone thinking.

Initiation Meeting

Early on we met with the key leaders in AGD PLUS to identify 'KPIs' or measures of success. This discussion included understanding aspects such as broad versus deep reach, resourcing implications of different techniques, best practice versus being pragmatic etc.

Evidence Based Thinking

To help frame discussions we established an evidence base about what works in regional contexts to join with our own experience and expertise. This includes reviewing large regional planning projects interstate as well as reaching out to key leaders/influencers in the regions via our extensive network of contacts to understand what works in their communities and opportunities for engagement.

Engagement Activities

We also ran a range of engagement activities summarised in Table 1.

Table 1 – Engagement Activities

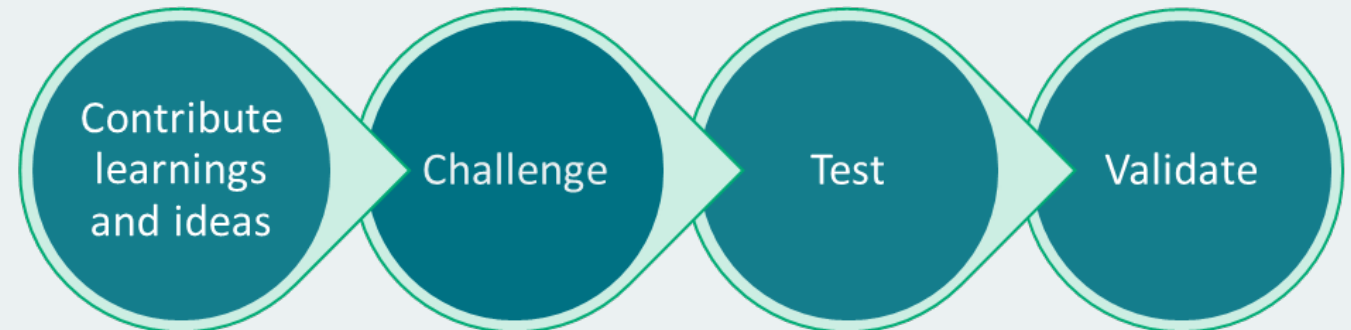| Engagement Activity	Purpose
URPS Think Tank	• To draw on the extensive experience and insights of our broader team of planning and engagement specialists who work across the State in land use planning, development assessment, strategy, policy and engagement.
Challenge Group	• To draw on the insights and expertise of other engagement practitioners that are experts in their field and deliver services across the State from organisations such as Department for Infrastructure and Transport, SA Water and Upper Spencer Gulf Cities . To challenge us and test and validate our ideas for engagement.
Workshop with PLUS	• To draw together information gathered in early tasks with our own experience and knowledge regarding the opportunities to deliver the engagement approach to stimulate thinking and discussion
Local Government Regional Planning Committee	• To talk to representatives of Councils to test our ideas and identify what successful engagement might look like
Workshop with State Planning Commission	• To continue to test and refine the proposed engagement approach that had been iteratively developed via the above activities

Figure 3 – Our process to develop the approach

What we heard

Overview

There were a range of themes identified through the discussion. A more detailed summary is provided in the accompanying formal report.

Some of the key issues are as follows:

- A balance of **depth** and **reach**
- **Ownership** and scope of influence
- **Education** and **temporal** nature of engagement – regional plans are evolutionary
- Speaking in a way communities **understand**
- The **role** of the Regions in delivering engagement
- **Resourcing** constraints
- **Timing** and **location** of engagement
- Engagement **tools.**

Depth and **Reach** were consistent themes throughout the engagement process on the approach. We define these in the following ways:

Reach
Reach means getting to more people.
Reach is important to enable people to be aware of the process and the opportunity to participate. It results in an engagement process that is accessible for many.

Depth
Depth means working with participants to make sure they understand the detail and underlying information fully.
Depth increases the meaningfulness of participants' contribution. It results in quality, well considered feedback and intelligence being received.

"The authors of the Regional Plan should hear direct from the community and reflect the Region's words in the final plan"
- Workshop participant

"To be engaged, people need to understand 'what's in it for me'"
- Workshop participant

Working with the Regions

Overview

The discussions with the Local Government Regional Planning Committee (LGRPC) suggested that the engagement for regions will be influenced by factors such as:

- **Relationships** – quality of relationships with Government, the State Planning Commission, PLUS, local community or other stakeholders

- **Capacity** – what personnel and funding resources are available

- **Vision** – whether they have a strong vision for their area that they want reflected in the Regional Plan

- **Role** – the nature of the delivery role – ie do they want to be in the driver's seat?

- **Level of Engagement** – some Councils and regions are highly engaged and have a history of strategic engagement with their community around strategic planning issues. This will impact on the anticipated level of engagement from the Council, their community and stakeholders.

The following table considers some of the possible roles and responsibilities between PLUS and the regions. These have not been road tested with the regions, but developed as a result of engaging with the regions.

Table 2 – Possible Roles and Responsibilities

PLUS	REGIONS
Access to data and information, such as population, demographics, development trends	Provide local knowledge of what's happening/what's important to their region.
Skills, knowledge and expertise to analyse data and information and represent it visually in maps and graphics	Provide any outcomes from recent engagements with stakeholders and the community.
Capacity to develop engagement strategies for each region in consultation with the relevant region	Use connections and networks-help to identify 'the right people'
Resources (people and other) to support rollout of the engagement	Some regions may have the capacity to contribute resources to support engagement activities (eg attend events, distribute material, provide venues etc).
Secondment/embed staff member to support the engagement and work with region to prepare the Plan. Alternatively, provide a 'case manager' approach for each region.	Provide information that contributes to the preparation of the Regional Plan.

The Approach
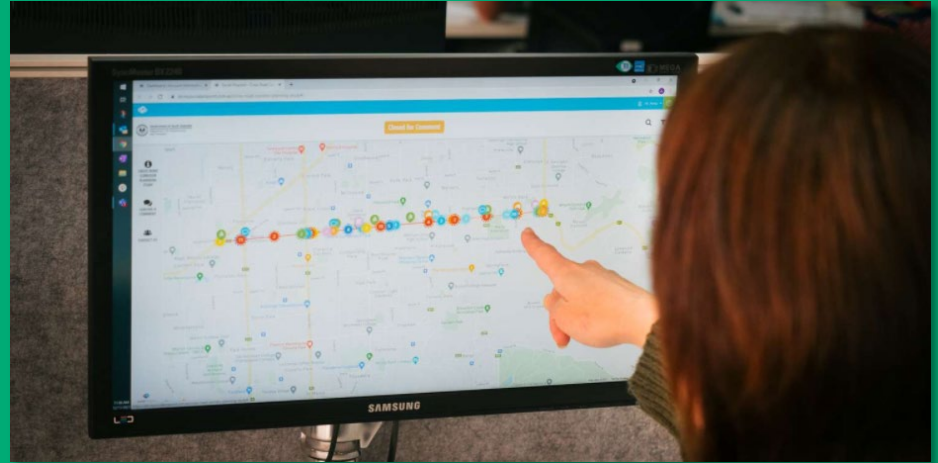
Purpose Statement

We recognise that community engagement is a fundamental part of the regional planning process.

Engagement will be undertaken in accordance with the Community Engagement Charter which sets out the following foundation principles about how engagement should be undertaken:

• Genuine

• Inclusive and respectful

• Fit for purpose

• Informed and transparent

• Reviewed and improved.

Engagement will be carefully planned for each region to ensure it meets these principles and recognises the broad range of community and stakeholder interests.

This engagement will assist in **understanding** the **vision** and **aspirations** of regional communities that will help guide how development is undertaken in the longer-term.

This engagement will seek to have **authentic** conversations with leaders within the community, key stakeholders, state agencies, and Councils who can work to ensure Regional Plans are delivered on the ground and have a **positive** and **meaningful** impact.

The engagement will also help raise **awareness** and **build capacity** within communities about the planning system to enable them to better **participate** in the planning of their region.

We will achieve this by providing information in a way the public can understand. The engagement will have **broad** reach to enable those who are interested to contribute, while also having more targeted conversations creating **depth** to work through the range of planning issues facing the regions, including social and physical infrastructure.

The engagement will also **build on** work that has already been undertaken, to make sure the findings from previous engagement activities are not lost.

The engagement will be designed to **close the loop** with stakeholders and community to inform them of the outcomes of the engagement process, and how they can access the final version of the Plan.

Collection of **data** and other information will be undertaken throughout the engagement to enable evaluation of the engagement process.

Recommendation 1:
Adopt a clear purpose statement to inform engagement decisions

Charter Principles in Action

Objectives for each individual engagement will need to be developed. However, these principles in action provide some commitment to how the Charter will be implemented.

Recommendation 2:
Adopt the 'Principles in action' to assist in delivering on the Community Engagement Charter

Charter Principle	Principles in Action
Engagement is genuine	We will develop long-term relationships that recognise the dynamic and evolving role of regional plans We will engage early and use different tools and tactics that enable people to participate We will be open and transparent about the scope of influence
Engagement is inclusive and respectful	We will engage with depth, those people that can affect change, particularly where they play a role in implementation We acknowledge that this may be the start of the conversation for some (eg First Nations People) and we will need to build a relationship and process for ongoing engagement through this engagement process
Engagement is Fit for Purpose	We will use multiple channels to engage but focus on a few things that we can do well within our resourcing constraints We will ask the right questions, in the right ways, and make sure people understand how regional plans can affect them
Engagement is informed and transparent	We will work with the regions to know what engagement has been undertaken before and what they have previously been told by stakeholders and the community We will involve Councils in developing the engagement plan for their region and work with them to define their role in the process
Engagement processes are reviewed and improved	We will reflect on previous engagement processes in the regions to learn from what has worked well and what can be improved We will reflect on the delivery of the engagement in the regions as it is 'rolled out', share learnings across regions and iteratively improve processes

Charter Principles in Action - Working with First Nations People

As this will be the State Planning Commission's and PLUS's first substantial engagement with First Nations people about planning related matters, it is recommended that the principles in action outlined here, which align with the Charter principles are embedded into the engagement planning. This should be seen as the start of engagement with First Nations and discussed with their representatives in those terms.

There is opportunity to look to other organisations such as the Landscape Boards to assist with establishing relationships and finding the key First Nations representatives in the community. These organisations often cover similar areas to the proposed Regional Plans and often have a good working knowledge of the Nations in those areas.

When engaging with First Nations, it is okay to get things wrong from time to time however it is important that the intention to get it right is there. It is essential to ensure that participants are clear on how advice and feedback will be used, and it is important that this is done respectfully.

Charter Principle	Principles in Action
Engagement is genuine	We will understand all the Nations who are impacted by these regional plans. We will understand that Native Title boundaries have 'buffers' and more than one Nation may care for any area. We will talk to the Nations to find out how they wish to be represented. We will acknowledge the rights and interests of the Nations on whose lands we are working We will be flexible as First Nations Leaders have many demands on their time. We will understand and acknowledge that the health and wellbeing of Country and people are all one and that obligations to Country and community are diverse.
Engagement is inclusive and respectful	We will acknowledge that traditional knowledge and passing down of this knowledge is important, we can only use their knowledge with permission and with respect. We will build in the required payments for Elders' time and knowledge/input to your engagement (time and travel expenses particularly). We will provide financial resources to remove participation barriers for others in these communities and create opportunities for many voices to be heard.
Engagement is Fit for Purpose	We will communicate in plain English (or language if this is possible) and ask them how they want information provided so they can take this back to their communities for discussion. Allow time to receive, process, discuss information. We will understand and respect decision-making processes. Discuss timeframes in a respectful manner.
Engagement is informed and transparent	We will understand the importance of protocols and accommodate these where possible . We will acknowledge that trust needs to be earned – be clear when communicating intentions, don't downplay concerns or fears.
Engagement processes are reviewed and improved	We will reflect on previous engagement processes in the regions to learn from what has worked well and what can be improved We will reflect on the delivery of engagement with First Nations in the regions as it is 'rolled out', share learnings across regions and iteratively improve processes

Collaboration with Councils

One of the fundamental early decisions driving the approach to engagement is the role each region is seeking to have regarding their level of agency in driving and participating in the creation of the regional plans.

We see this as a spectrum, and have defined the potential roles of regions to align with an increasing level of agency.

At each stage of the program, Councils may take different roles. It is acknowledged that the new planning system provides opportunities for groups of Councils to perform certain functions through joint planning arrangements. Councils that establish Joint Planning Boards are responsible for the preparation of Regional Plans. For a range of reasons, Councils have not established these Boards.

Recommendation 3:
The Commission support the Regions adopting the role of 'Partner' even if they have limited resources to support delivery

Role of the region*	Description
Leader	The Region leads the engagement to support the preparation of the Regional Plan, including preparation of the engagement plan and delivery of the community engagement activities
Partner	A partnership model would see mutual sign off at key steps in the process and shared delivery of the engagement approach. Both parties contribute resources towards the planning and delivery of the engagement. Depending on regional/Council capacity this may differ in terms of extent and type of contribution
Contributor	Participation generally through the engagement, contributing regional knowledge and expertise
Observer	To be kept generally informed through the engagement process

*It is noted that what Councils can do to support the process will vary within their own priorities and resourcing constraints.
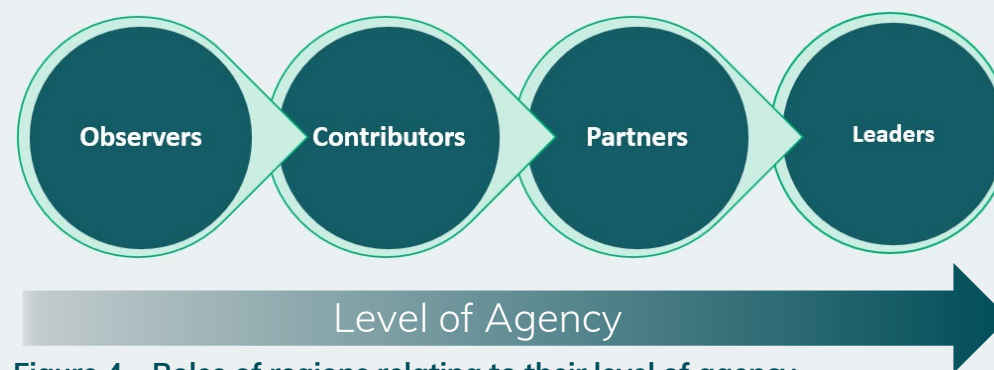

Figure 4 – Roles of regions relating to their level of agency

Engagement Phases

The proposed approach to engagement recommends four key phases.

The **first phase** is the preparation of the Engagement Plan.

The Engagement Plan should be based on the template provided in the Community Engagement Toolkit and be prepared with reference to the Charter.

Once the Engagement Plan is prepared, the **second phase** seeks to set the vision and priorities for the region to help inform the Regional Plan. For many regions this will be the most intensive component of the engagement program.

The **third phase** is the release of the draft Plan for consultation.

The **final phase** is about communicating the outcomes and evaluating the process.

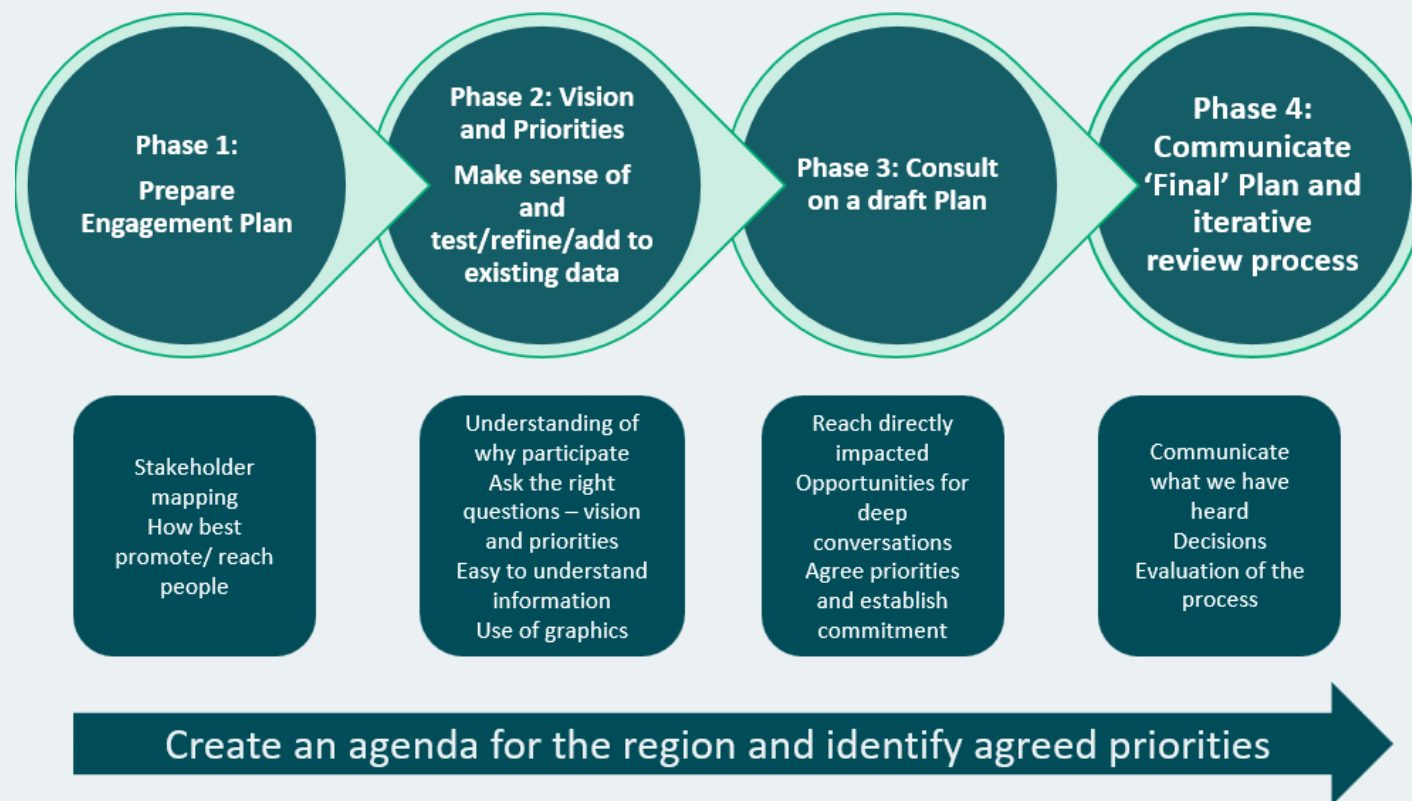More detail is provided for each phase below.

Figure 5 – Engagement phases

Recommendation 4:
Adopt four Engagement Phases that can be applied to each region

Recommendation 5:
The Commission consult the Local Government Regional Planning Committee on the final approach

Delivering the Approach

Preparing the Engagement Plan

Agree on roles and Responsibilities

It is recommended that at the early stages of developing the plan, Councils are engaged around their role.

Stakeholder Analysis

Stakeholder mapping is a fundamental part of the process and is crucial to the success of the Plan. Seeking involvement from the regional Council and Economic Development Boards and State Agencies will be an important part of the stakeholder mapping

Tactics and Tools

Attachment B of the Community Engagement Plan includes a range of engagement tools for different levels of engagement (using the IAP2). This is a good starting point for identifying the right tactics for engaging with regional communities.

As discussed in detail above, the right tactics and tools need to be evaluated against the intended level of participation and the stakeholder analysis

Figure 5 – Steps of preparing the Engagement Plan

Recommendation 6:
The Community Engagement Plan Template within the Community Engagement Charter be used.

Recommendation 7:
Engagement Plans are bespoke for each area although they may have some common objectives, key messages and tactics

Building Ongoing Relationships

Building ongoing relationships

There is a fundamental shift in approach to strategic planning in South Australia.

The move toward Regional Plans that are evolutionary and contemporary means that ongoing relationships are more important than ever before.

Regional Plans will be 'living documents' that change in response to emerging issues and trends.

For this to be successful, this engagement approach is the beginning of a long-term process. The tactics and tools used will need to build lasting relationships with people that can help shape the vision for the future and influence outcomes. This may include traditional stakeholders, but also extend to community or business leaders that are active participants in the community and positive champions for their area/region (eg the local shop, hotel owner, sporting club manager, school principal etc).

Achieving a high level of 'depth' with those that can influence decision-making and bring regional knowledge to the discussion will be fundamental to overall success.

Recommendation 8:
Use technology and media tools to assist in delivering 'reach' and to extend the invitation to participate.

Recommendation 9:
Use tools that deliver deep and meaningful engagement with those that are key influencers in the region.

The recommended approach to **Depth** and **Reach**:

Reach
Use tools that have high reach and enable people to be aware of the process and the opportunity to participate.

Depth
Depth can be used to support conversation that explore opportunities with stakeholder groups and key influencers with knowledge and expertise in the community.

Depth can be achieved by working with participants to make sure they understand the detail and underlying information fully.

These meaningful conversations are iterative and build up well considered feedback and intelligence. They support longer-term relationships and build support for the Plan.

Tactics and Tools

Tactics and Tools

There are range of tactics and tools that can be used collectively to achieve high **reach** so that people understand that there is a process they can contribute to and high **depth** for those that genuinely want to participate.

Some of the tactics and tools identified through discussions to inform the preparation of this approach are provided here.

This list is not exhaustive, but is provided as a series of suggestions. The choice of tactics should be bespoke for each plan and chosen to best suit the stakeholders needs, in line with the Charter objectives.

Recommendation 10:
Tactics and tools should be chosen to meet stakeholder needs and the Charter's objectives.

Tools	When to Use	IAP2	Resourcing Impact	Reach	Depth
Electronic tools (eg Social Pinpoint)	These tools achieve high reach for those that are tech savvy. They are effective where there is a campaign with high reach to attract people to the web site which would be the central portal.	Consult	M	H	M
Geographically targeted Facebook posts	Facebook content that is geographically targeted. This is a mechanism drive traffic to the web page, but can also lead to informal conversation.	Inform	L	H	L
YourSay	Survey and information on YourSay, which has a strong numbers of subscribers. Most effective once Plan developed and seeking feedback.	Inform/Consult	L	M-H	L
Media	Local radio can be particularly helpful to get the message out in regional areas.	Inform	L	M-H	L
Static displays/ posters	Static displays set up in Council offices or other common locations that are visited by the local community can help raise awareness and promote engagement.	Inform	L	M-H	L
Think Tanks on key topics	Think Tanks are often used to 'unpack issues'. Individuals are invited to patriciate. How the group is selected is critical in success. These are useful early in the process when setting the vision.	Involve	M	M	H
Working /Governance groups	Heads of planning from within the region and at state level can help drive the project forward – these can be issue specific or general. Strong project management is important to success. However, they can deliver a higher degree of collaboration.	Collaborate	M	M	H
Stakeholder workshops	These workshops are generally invited participants based on knowledge and experience and roles within the community (eg Economic Development Board, Council representatives, State agencies etc). They can be useful for hearing multiple competing interests and working to resolve some of these. They should be professionally facilitated.	Consult	H	L	H

Tactics and Tools

Tactics and Tools

Additional tactics and tools that could broaden depth and reach.

Tools	When to Use	IAP2	Resourcing Impact	Reach	Depth
Citizens Panel	A citizens panel could be established for each region that is selected from the YourSay Panels.	Involve	H	M	H
Youth Panels	To reach hard to reach groups, an option is to establish a Youth Panel.	Consult	H	M	H
Listening posts	Phone a planner can be beneficial where people may be seeking more information.	Consult	L	M	M
Surveys	One example cited was an iPad at McDonalds which enabled young people to fill in surveys. Alternatives are telephone surveys and postal surveys.	Consult	M	M	M
Community information/drop in sessions	Drop in sessions allow a longer period of times for face to face engagement on specified days to work around people's busy schedules. They work well in high trafficked areas or in conjunction with other community events which already draw a crowd.	Inform/consult	H	M	M

Key Messages

The following comprises some draft key messages and lines of enquiry that can be further shaped and developed as the engagement develops.

Key messages are the scaffolding that other project information can hang off of. They will be detailed, refined and developed as the engagement progresses.

Emphasis for key messages is in explaining Regional Plans in plain English, and making it clear why participation is important. To do this they will also be tailored to specific stakeholders and audiences as needed.

Recommendation 11:
Key messages should be further developed, tailored and expanded on in order to suit project and stakeholder needs.

Role of Regional Plans

Regional Plans have an important role in planning for the future.

They identify how growth and change will occur in our regions over a 15-30 year period

The regional plan will look at:

- Where houses and jobs will go

- How they will be serviced

- What infrastructure they need and how it will be provided

- Different growth scenarios – we can't see the future, but we can be prepared for it.

Regional plans will make recommendations about future zoning and how land can be developed

Regional plans will ensure infrastructure can be delivered to support growing communities and business.

Regional plans set the direction for future planning and development of South Australia.

Regional Plans will include performance indicators and targets to help measure success.

The process

Regional Plans are prepared by the independent State Planning Commission

Regional Plans must be approved by the Minister for Planning before taking affect

Regional Plans must be consistent with state planning policies – a vision for South Australia's planning and development system.

Community Engagement Charter

Engagement on the Regional Plans must be undertaken to meet the principles of the Community Engagement Charter.

We are genuinely interested in your views about what you would like to see into the future.

We will keep you informed and provide feedback on the end result.

Consultation must comply with the Community Engagement Charter. This requires that engagement is genuine and fit for purpose.

We will use a range of ways to communicate information and collect feedback in ways that are simple and convenient.

Lines of Enquiry

The following comprises some key lines of enquiry that can be further shaped and developed as the engagement develops.

Lines of enquiry provide examples of the types of questions we may ask during the engagement. Again, they are not exhaustive but are launching off points from which further detailed questions can be developed, as well as specific ones for particular stakeholders or audiences.

Recommendation 12:
Lines of enquiry should be further developed, tailored and expanded on in order to suit project and stakeholder needs.

Lines of enquiry

- What is your vision for your region for the next 30+ years?

  - What would make it a great place to live?

- What are the opportunities for the region?

  - What makes your region unique?

  - What makes your region strong?

  - What makes your region diverse?

- How would you like your region to grow?

  - What would help it grow in this way?

- What does your region need to set it up for success?

  - What are the opportunities for the next generation to be able to live and work in your region?

Measures of Success

The following comprises the Measures of Success that align with the Community Engagement Charter Principles.

Achieving these demonstrates that the Engagement Approach has met the objectives aligned to the Charter Principles.

It shows us that the engagement planning, stakeholder mapping and ultimately the tactics chosen have met the needs of the engagement and stakeholders.

Charter Principle	Our Objectives	Performance Outcomes / Measures
Engagement is genuine	We will develop long-term relationships that recognise the dynamic and evolving role of regional plans We will engage early and use different tools and tactics that allow people to participate We will be open and transparent about the scope of influence	Feedback sought is targeted to what can be influenced. Engagement contributed to the substance of the Plan.
Engagement is inclusive and respectful	We will engage with depth, those people that can affect change, particularly where they play a role in implementation We acknowledge that this may be the start of the conversation for some (e.g. First Nations People) and we will need to build a relationship through this process.	Stakeholders were provided sufficient information to fully understand the project. Information was in plain English and easy to understand. Information was easy to access. Feedback was convenient to provide.
Engagement is Fit for Purpose	We will use multi-channels to engage but focus on a few things that we can do well within our resourcing constraints. We will ask the right questions and make sure people understand how Regional Plans can affect them.	Channels for sharing information suited the stakeholders mapped. Channels for seeking feedback suited the stakeholders mapped. Information is relevant and targeted to stakeholder issues and concerns.
Engagement is informed and transparent	We will work with the regions to know what engagement has been undertaken before We will involve councils in developing the engagement plan and define their role in the process.	Stakeholders would participate in similar engagement activities again. The scope of regional plan and the level of influence was understood.

Summary of Recommendations

Recommendation 1:
Adopt a clear purpose statement to inform engagement decisions

Recommendation 2:
Adopt the 'Principles in action' to assist in delivering on the Community Engagement Charter

Recommendation 3:
Support the Regions adopting the role of 'Partner' even if they have limited resources to support delivery

Recommendation 4:
Adopt four Engagement Phases that can be applied to each region

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The Commission consult the Regional Planning Group on the final approach

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Recommendation 8:
Use technology and media tools to assist in delivering 'reach' and to extend the invitation to participate.

Recommendation 9:
Use tools that deliver deep and meaningful engagement with those that are key influencers in the region.

Recommendation 10:
Tactics and tools should be chosen to meet stakeholder needs and meeting the Charter objectives.

Recommendation 11:
Key messages should be further developed, tailored and expanded on in order to suit project and stakeholder needs.

Recommendation 12:
Lines of enquiry should be further developed, tailored and expanded on in order to suit project and stakeholder needs.