



Draft Community Engagement Framework 2021-24

For public consultation

22 October 2021

Acknowledgement of Country

Greater Western Water respectfully acknowledges Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples as Australia's first peoples. We respectfully acknowledge the Traditional Owners of the lands and waters upon which we work, operate and rely, the people of the Kulin Nation. We pay our deepest respects to their Elders, past, present and emerging.

We acknowledge the continued cultural, social and spiritual connections that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples have with the lands and waters, and recognise and value that the Traditional Owner groups have cared for and protected them for thousands of generations.

In the spirit of reconciliation, we remain committed to working in partnership with local Traditional Owners to ensure their ongoing contribution to the future of the water management landscape while maintaining their cultural and spiritual connections.

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About us

Greater Western Water provides water services across Melbourne and its rapidly growing western region.

Established on 1 July 2021, Greater Western Water was formed by bringing together City West Water and Western Water to meet the demands of our region and deliver reliable, affordable and secure water services now and for decades to come.

We are a Victorian Government corporation and are proud to serve a vibrant and diverse community from Melbourne's city centre through to regional townships like Lancefield, Woodend, Bacchus Marsh and Little River.

[Drafting note only: An MD foreword will also be included in the final version of this document, post-consultation]

Our region

Greater Western Water services 580,000 customers over a 3,700 square kilometre area from Melbourne's Central Business District (CBD) and inner-west and north-west suburbs, through the Melton and Sunbury growth corridors to Bacchus Marsh and the Macedon Ranges.

In addition, our service region hosts thousands of people each day who work, visit and play.

Our service area is outlined in Figure 1 and covers the following local government areas (LGAs):

- Brimbank City Council
- City of Melbourne (part)
- City of Yarra
- Hobsons Bay City Council
- Hume City Council (part)
- Macedon Ranges Shire Council (part)
- Maribyrnong City Council
- Melton City Council
- Moonee Valley City Council
- Moorabool Shire Council (part)
- Wyndham City Council



Figure 1 Map of Greater Western Water service area by local government area (LGA)

Legend

RWP Recycled water plant
WFP Water filtration plant

Introduction

We exist to provide communities with high quality water and sanitation services. Community is at the heart of Greater Western Water.

The work we do is essential to the way communities live, work and enjoy public spaces. We value what our communities want. As paying customers you fund the work that we do so it's important to us that community can be part of the decisions we make to design and deliver the best possible services.

Listening and responding to the views and needs of our community strengthens our decisions by helping us understand what is important to the people we serve.

Community engagement supports us to create connections with our diverse community of individuals, groups, households and businesses. It also supports us to deliver outcomes beyond safe and affordable water services, to contribute to healthier, greener and more resilient communities.

*Our ambition is to involve community in the way we work
to make better decisions together.*

Why we engage

Community engagement benefits everyone. It helps guide our decisions as we can draw on community insights and ideas in addition to our own expertise. We engage to:

- understand what communities value most and build a stronger evidence base to inform our decisions
- increase transparency in decision-making processes
- promote mutual understanding and stronger relationships between our people and communities
- build trust and increase community confidence in our organisation
- share the ownership of opportunities and challenges that can benefit or impact local communities
- meet regulatory requirements
- support our people to advocate on behalf of community
- broaden community participation in democratic processes.

How does good engagement benefit the community?

Community engagement aims to build knowledge in the community and empower groups and individuals to make informed decisions on projects that affect or interest them. It provides opportunities to share ideas, opinions, lived experiences and expertise. Good engagement seeks to build strong and resilient communities.

How does good engagement benefit our organisation?

Good engagement helps us to understand the needs, values and preferences of our community and to use these insights to guide both the work we do (for example, delivering services, undertaking works, planning for the future) and how we do it. Community insights build on our expertise to help us achieve mutually beneficial outcomes. Good engagement supports our community to understand the decision-making process, underpinned by clear processes, which leads to increased trust.

Purpose of this framework

This framework describes what community engagement means to Greater Western Water, who we engage with and how. It creates a shared understanding of community engagement by:

- defining what we mean by community engagement
- establishing principles that guide the design and delivery of engagement plans and activities
- recognising the diversity of our community to support inclusive design and delivery
- describing the steps we take to design and deliver engagement activities
- outlining how we capture learnings and promote continuous improvement.

How we developed this framework

This framework has been developed through consideration of leading practice and industry benchmarking along with consultation with our people (Greater Western Water employees) using interviews, workshops and online engagement. This document will be reviewed regularly with our community to ensure it reflects their needs and aspirations, as well as emerging engagement practices.

Section 1: Our Engagement Approach

We are committed to making a positive impact by supporting our communities to grow and prosper and we adhere to the practices recommended by the International Association of Public Participation (IAP2), the peak body for community and stakeholder engagement.

Our commitment is made real through our community engagement Definition and Principles and supported by clear steps to ensure we plan meaningful opportunities for people to participate in our decision making.

Definition and Principles

At Greater Western Water we define community engagement as: *An ongoing partnership with our diverse community to plan and deliver our services.*

We are guided by the following principles when designing and delivering our engagement activities:

Meaningful

We are committed to providing our community with genuine opportunities to participate in decisions that affect them. We seek to engage early, broadly, deeply and often, and we will consider all views.

Transparent

We provide timely, comprehensive and easy-to-understand information to support engagement including the rationale behind the negotiable and non-negotiable aspects. We share the outcomes of engagement processes with our community.

Inclusive

We think of all community members when designing our communications and engagement activities. We provide information in easy-to-understand and accessible formats and provide support to those who need assistance to take part in our activities.

Collaborative

We strive to develop exceptional and strong relationships with the community and stakeholders to achieve the best outcomes for all.

Integrity

We are accountable for engaging early, protecting people's privacy and addressing concerns or questions along the way. We report on the engagement outcomes and share the impact of the community's input on the decision.

Respect

We acknowledge the expertise, perspective and needs of customers, community and stakeholders.

Our steps to leading practice engagement

Our engagement process sets out the steps to design and deliver consistent community engagement plans. The process steps and our commitments are described on the following pages.

The process can be scaled to suit the size and complexity of the engagement required and will ensure we select the best tools and deliver an approach that is fit for purpose.

The process is continuous, with evaluation directly linked to planning for a new engagement phase within a project or to inform a new project.

Through this approach, our engagement planning will build on insights gained and lessons learnt from previous engagement.

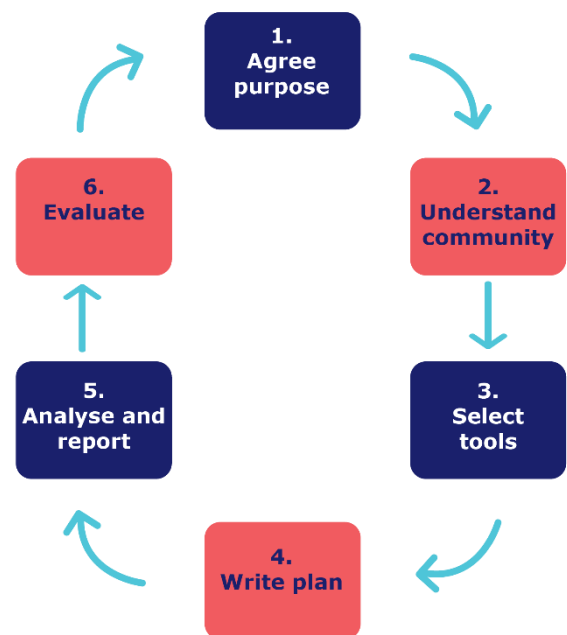


Figure 2 Engagement steps cycle

There may be times where there are no negotiables attached to a project and community input to influence decision making is not possible. This may be the case with infrastructure renewals for example, where the life of our assets is coming to an end and need to be replaced to ensure continuity of services. Wherever possible in these cases, we will make sure that at a minimum you are given timely and accurate information.

Process steps and commitment to leading practice engagement

Step	Commitment
1. Agree purpose	<p>We agree the purpose of the engagement, what we are seeking to achieve and what can or cannot be influenced through the process. We do this by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Determining the level of engagement based on the IAP2 spectrum (see Fig. 3). • Defining the engagement purpose (why we are engaging) and engagement objectives (what we want to achieve). • Defining the negotiables (what the community can influence) and the non-negotiables (what the community can't influence).
2. Understand community	<p>We understand who will be interested or affected by our project and ensure we identify those community members who may need extra support to participate. We do this by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Researching the local community in the project area using demographic information for suburb and local government areas, insights from completed engagements and other customer data available to us. • Considering those that come to our region to work, visit and play. • Connecting with colleagues who have experience partnering with the same communities and stakeholders. • Understanding other projects in the area (connecting across our own teams and with government and project delivery agencies) to understand recent, current and upcoming engagement activity. Where possible, we will coordinate or collaborate upcoming activities. • Connecting with stakeholders such as community leaders, local government representatives and community organisations to understand what support is needed to enable participation.

3. Select tools

We select a range of tools to collect meaningful feedback, giving people multiple opportunities to participate. We do this by:

- Asking the same questions using different tools that include in-person and online activities.
- Providing information in accessible formats.
- Selecting tools that match our engagement objectives.
- Selecting tools that will capture information about the person participating* as well as quantitative and qualitative information.

4. Write plan

We document our engagement approach, describing delivery timeframes, key roles and responsibilities as well as supporting communication requirements. We do this by:

- Writing a plan that has multiple review points.
- Including information in our plan that describes the engagement questions, the tools to ask the questions, stakeholder analysis and key messages.
- Including evaluation criteria to ensure engagement activities are appropriately measured.

5. Analyse and report

We analyse the findings of engagement activities and document these to communicate the findings back to participants. We do this by:

- Creating a process to sort and group information into themes.
- Analysing the information by theme to identify trends and points of difference in responses.
- Documenting the analysis to describe who participated in what activities, the feedback shared and the project next steps.
- Closing the loop with the people who participated in the process. The report back to community should summarise the engagement process, feedback collected and what decisions were made using the feedback.

6. Evaluate

We review our process against the engagement objectives to determine what worked well and what could be done differently. We do this by:

- Making monitoring and evaluation part of engagement planning.
- Assigning a member of the team to be responsible for collecting and storing the information.

- Starting the monitoring and evaluation process when the engagement launches.
- Regularly checking in with the team to discuss the engagement activities, findings so far and if the engagement objectives are being met. This conversation is documented.
- Including participant feedback opportunities in each engagement activity to understand their experience.
- Conducting a lessons learnt workshop at the end of each engagement phase.
- Preparing a lessons learnt report that is accessible across our organisation, and implementing better ways of doing things for future engagement activities.

**We only collect the user information we need to help inform the development of our strategies, plans, initiatives and services to shape how we deliver services to you.*

Section 2: Engaging our Community

Our community is made of people who live in Melbourne's CBD to rural farming areas as well as the suburbs and towns in between. Where people live, work, visit and play are important considerations but so too are other aspects like age, cultural and language characteristics, disability, vulnerability and accessibility, gender identity and household type. Outlined overleaf are some interesting highlights about the people who make up our service area¹.

Our community

Successful engagement occurs when there is a strong understanding about the community a project is located in. The information below provides a starting point for the planning phase of projects. This information has drawn on the Australian Bureau of Statistics 2016 Census.

Across all our activities, Greater Western Water has daily contact with customers and community members. The learnings from these interactions are valuable in informing planned engagement activities.

We also use relevant data and research about key aspects of the Greater Western Water service area to help inform our approach to decision making.

¹ All information cited below is taken from the 2016 ABS Census using QuickStats with exception to the LGBTIQ+ data which is referenced on page 6.



LGA's with
population **below**
Victoria's median
age of 37

- **Melbourne**
- **Wyndham**
- **Maribyrnong**
- **Yarra**

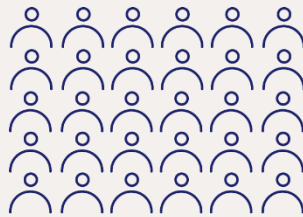


LGA's with
population **above**
Victoria's median
age of 37

- **Hume**
- **Macedon Ranges**
- **Moorabool**

12, 471
6.4%

of **Brimbank** residents are
living with a disability.
This is compared to the
5% average across Victoria



0.54%

of residents **identify as**
Aboriginal or Torres
Strait Islander people.



26%

of people **speak**
a language
other than
English



94%

Macedon Ranges
Highest number of
population in a
stand alone house



0.2%

Melbourne City
Lowest number of
population in a
stand alone house



70%

Melbourne City
Residents renting
compared to Victorian
average of **39%**



130

different cultural
groups within
GWW area

Representation of
LGBTQIA+ communitiy
in GWW is higher in:

- **Hobsons Bay**
- **Yarra**
- **Melbourne**
- **Moonee Valley**



When planning for engagement activities with our diverse community, we will:

Age

- Consider the ages of the population where the project is located. This will help determine what activities should be selected and where they should be located.

Culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD)

- Consider the languages spoken at home other than English – will we require translators or translated materials?
- Identify the cultural leaders who can connect us with a broader reach of community members.
- Research whether there is a CALD media stream that we can use to promote the project.
- Consider how we will reach those community members who may not participate in large scale engagement activities.

People with a disability, vulnerable communities and accessibility

- Consider the community members in the project area who may experience barriers to participation.
- Identify community leaders, peak organisations and LGA officers to assist with reaching these groups.
- Ensure the engagement methods are accessible and that we can support vulnerable people to participate, for example, providing data cards, incentives or covering transport costs.
- Understand what type of supports are needed to ensure our engagement approach is accessible for people living with disabilities.

LGBTIQ+

- Identify community leaders or peak organisations to connect with to engage with members of this community.

Household types

- Who lives in the homes that may be impacted by your project? Are they owners or renters?
- How will you reach them? Will you be able to do a letterbox drop or door knock?

First Nations community

Our service area is located on the lands of the Kulin Nation. Our service area and region spans the Bunurong, Dja Dja Wurrung, Taungurung, Wadawurrung and Wurundjeri Woi Wurrung Traditional Owner Groups, lands and waterways.

First Nations community members live in all parts of the service area of Greater Western Water. There are higher numbers of First Nations community members living in the Hume, Moorabool and Melton council areas in particular.

Forging strong relationships with First Nations community groups and organisations will provide invaluable knowledge on the clan groups within our service region, their

aspirations and the important issues affecting them, and the diversity within the First Nations communities.

Fostering partnerships with local First Nations community organisations and existing community networks is also vital to seek advice and guidance on the most appropriate way to engage.

We will partner with Traditional Owners, First Nations community organisations and First Nations community and our approach to this important work will continue to be refined in parallel with this Community Engagement Framework. Community engagement must be undertaken from a place of cultural sensitivity that allows community members to feel safe and respected at all times.

To ensure that engagement is consistent and ongoing, we seek guidance from Greater Western Water's First Nations Advisor before engaging directly.

Addressing barriers to participation

Within our service area there are community members who experience barriers to participation in engagement. These people may experience educational disadvantage, have low paying and insecure employment, experience family violence, and/or have limited access to public transport. Pockets of our service area are characterised by relatively high levels of disadvantage. To address this, we need to consider how to reach all people and the best tools and methods to create optimal opportunity for engagement.

We also have support systems in place through our Customer Service Team to help those who might be experiencing family violence or financial challenges.

Social Disadvantage

Highest disadvantage is observed in parts of the following LGAs:

- **Brimbank**
- **Maribyrnong**
- **Melton**
- **Wyndham**



Understanding engagement preferences

In 2021 we listened to our diverse community members through focus groups with younger people, older people, people with a disability, people experiencing vulnerability, those from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds and residents from city, suburbs and towns. We asked the people in these groups how they prefer to receive information and provide feedback. We heard the different ways individuals like to engage and details of their feedback is included below.

By reflecting the needs and preferences of our community, we can design engagement to be inclusive and reach as many people as possible. This can be achieved, for example, by providing information in community languages and using a range of engagement tools and activities. A range of support options are also available to help reduce barriers to participation.

Greater Western Water community groups - engagement preferences

<p>Younger people</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Social media to learn about projects, environmental initiatives • Short videos and infographics • Eye-catching project information that is easy to read and includes graphics • Engagement activities in classrooms or at university • Incentives such as giveaways, gift cards or donations on their behalf <p><i>"Social media is great for young people. Create content specific to them"</i></p>	<p>Residents</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Receiving information in a range of formats such as mail, websites, SMS and email • Local newspapers and Council magazines • Activities at community festivals and markets • Understanding how their participation has informed project decisions • Project information that is easy to understand <p><i>"Need for diversity of options (paper and online) to accommodate different preferences, technology capabilities and access to internet"</i></p>
<p>Older people</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Activities in places they often visit such as shopping centres, neighbourhood houses and Probus Clubs 	<p>People with a disability</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Information in a range of formats both hard copy and digital • Engage through peak advocacy organisations

- Information that is easy to read with contact details clearly provided. Generally prefer hard copy information by mail.
- Facebook

"Digital format can be a problem as many older people don't have devices to do everything digitally"

- Like live captioning and translators to support their participation
- Information that uses graphics and images to explain key elements

"Not everyone has access to technology. Information needs to be provided in multiple formats"

Culturally and linguistically diverse

- Prefer information in their own language where possible
- Watching educational videos and information that explain how things work behind the scenes
- Seeking information from trusted leaders
- Attending community events and festivals

"Visual based videos break down the language barrier"

People experiencing vulnerability

- Some community members prefer a more one-to-one engagement approach
- May have limited time or resources to participate and like incentives
- Could be reached through Financial Counsellors or other community organisations that provide support
- Engage with peak bodies and advocacy organisations

"Need to give people an option about how they participate"

Engaging with our stakeholders

As an essential service provider, we work closely with other organisations, including local councils, other utility companies, government agencies and special interest and advocacy groups to deliver the best outcomes for customers, the community and the environment.

We undertake regular stakeholder analysis to identify opportunities to further strengthen relationships and find better ways to work together.

Section 3: Guiding our Engagement

Our guiding public participation framework

"Community engagement is a planned process with the specific purpose of working across organisations, stakeholders and communities to shape our decisions or actions in relation to a problem, opportunity or outcome"

International Association of Public Participation

Greater Western Water is guided by IAP2's Core Value and Public Participation Spectrum².

IAP2's Core Values for engagement professionals define the expectations and aspirations of good engagement process. The seven Core Values are described below.

1. Public participation is based on the belief that those who are affected by a decision have a right to be involved in the decision-making process.
2. Public participation includes the promise that the public's contribution will influence the decision.
3. Public participation promotes sustainable decisions by recognising and communicating the needs and interests of all participants, including decision makers.
4. Public participation seeks out and facilitates the involvement of those potentially affected by or interested in a decision.
5. Public participation seeks input from participants in designing how they participate.
6. Public participation provides participants with the information they need to participate in a meaningful way.
7. Public participation communicates to participants how their input affected the decision.

IAP2's Public Participation Spectrum sets out levels of engagement and the associated promise. The Spectrum is a helpful tool to guide discussions when planning engagement.

² Source: <https://www.iap2.org/>

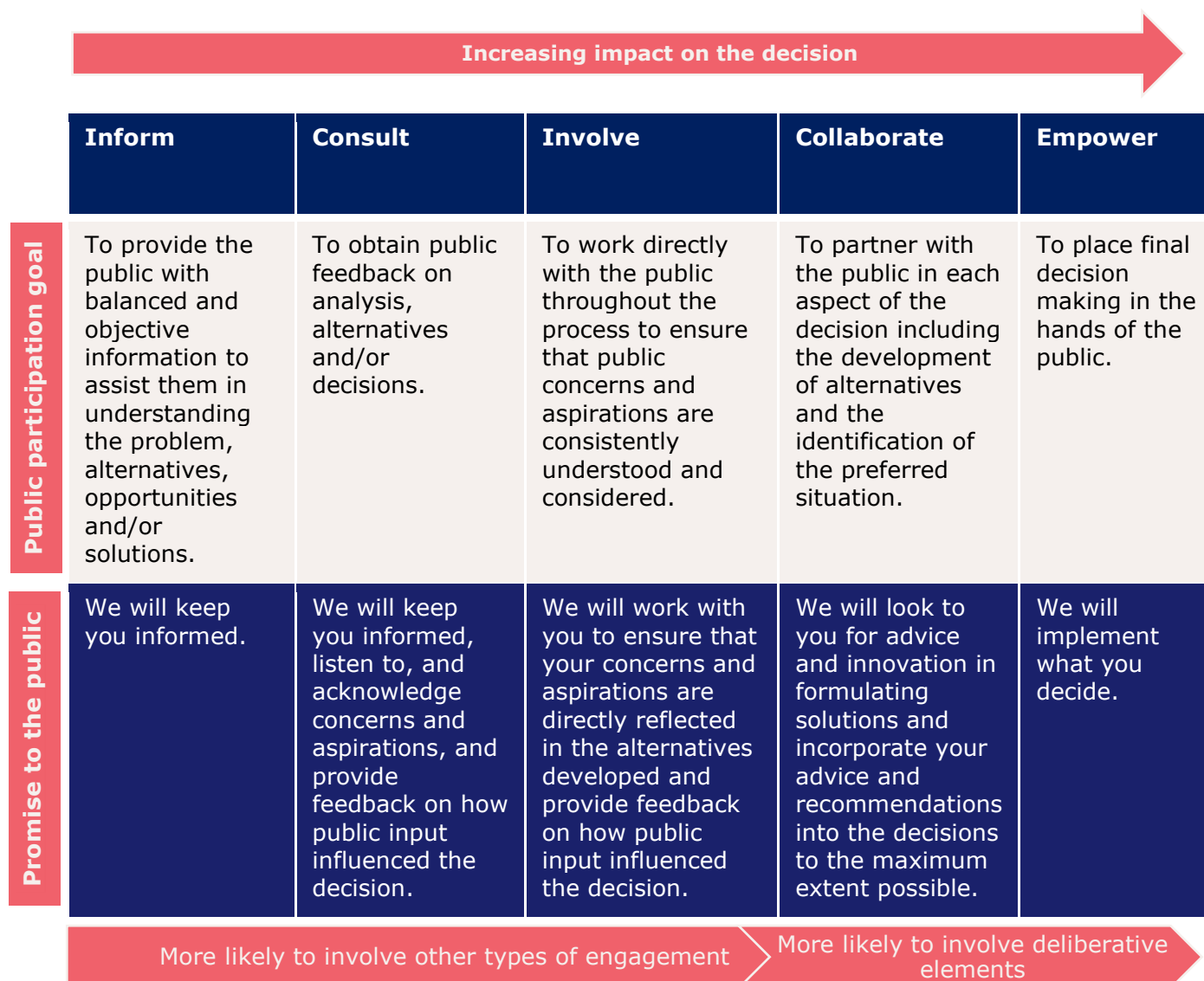


Figure 3 IAP2 Spectrum of Public Participation

Essential Services Commission (ESC) engagement expectations

The ESC is the independent regulator that oversees price reviews and business performance for all Victorian essential services including the water industry. Through formal processes they exercise their responsibilities under the *Essential Services Commission Act 2001* with the aim to drive better value for customers.

The ESC's expectation is that we will include our customers at the centre of our business's decision making through a robust community engagement process. Not all engagement activities require extensive engagement, however it is expected that the engagement is broad and adequately captures the expectations of our customers. Fundamentally, the ESC expects to see well planned engagement undertaken earlier, deeper and broader.

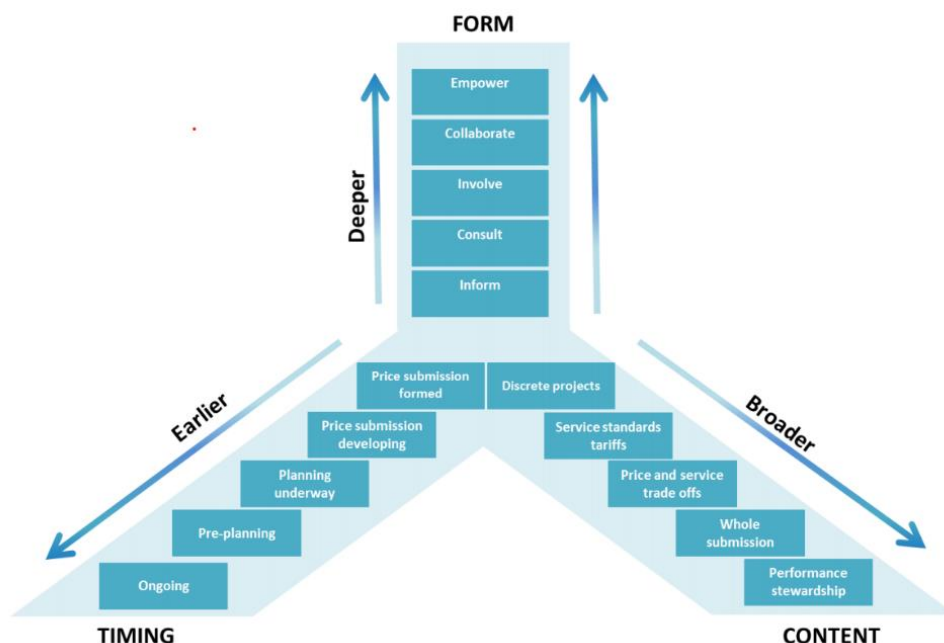


Figure 4 ESC Customer engagement diagram

Roles and responsibilities

While everyone who has a relationship with Greater Western Water has a role in the successful implementation of this Community Engagement Framework, there are key roles and responsibilities, as outlined in the table below.

Role	Responsibility
Board Director	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Good level of understanding of our engagement principles and aspirations. • Apply the engagement principles in their day-to-day interactions with community members.
Executive Leadership Team	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Good understanding of the Community Engagement Framework, handbook and resources. • Advocate for the consistent implementation of the Framework. • Resource staff to deliver community engagement through project budgets. • Advocate to the Board about the role of community engagement by referencing the Framework in all Board paper as appropriate.
Engagement Advisors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Detailed understanding of the Community Engagement Framework, handbook and resources. • Support our people to design and deliver community engagement. • Identify opportunities to build on community engagement practice with a focus on continuous improvement. • Lead the review and evaluation process.
Representative Bodies and Advisory Committees	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bring a representative voice to Greater Western Water processes. • Strengthen relationships between Greater Western Water and community members. • Advocate for minority groups. • Encourage and promote community engagement opportunities among networks. • Share information amongst networks.
Our people	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Good level of understanding of the Community Engagement Framework, handbook and resources.

- Use the framework resources to design and deliver engagement processes.
- Coordinate engagement activities across projects and places.
- Seek out engagement champions for support and guidance.

Community members

- Respect engagement processes and participants including Greater Western Water, other community members and stakeholders.
- Constructively participate in engagement processes.
- Share local knowledge, values and experiences.

Legislative and policy requirements

This Community Engagement Framework has been developed in the context of policies and legislation that guide engagement, and Victorian Government and international perspectives about what is leading practice community engagement.

Source	Publisher and publish date	Description
LEGISLATION		
<i>Water Industry Act 1994</i>	Administered by DELWP, 1994	The Water Industry Act regulates the water industry
<i>Environmental Protection Amendment Act 2017</i>	<u>Administered by EPA</u> , 2021	Provides the legal framework to protect Victoria's environment
Water Industry Regulatory Order 2014 (Victoria Government Gazette, G43, 23 October 2014, pp2485-2491)	<u>Administered by DELWP</u> , 2014	The Order provides a framework for economic regulation by the Essential Services Commission for services provided by the regulated water authority.
<i>Water Act 1989</i>	<u>Administered by DELWP</u> , 1989	This Act relates to Victoria's provision and management of water.
<i>Essential Services Commission Act 2001</i>	<u>Essential Services Commission (ESC)</u> , 2001	This Victorian legislation enables the Essential Services Commission to perform its regulatory and advisory functions.

POLICY/GUIDANCE DOCUMENT		
Public Participation in Government Decision-making: Better practice guide	<u>Victorian Auditor-General's Office</u> (VAGO) (2015)	This guide provides the Victorian Government with a high-level framework and principles for public participation in government decision-making processes.
Water for Victoria – Water Plan	<u>DELWP</u> (2016)	This plan recognises the need to secure future water availability to meet population growth and climate change impacts.
A Guide to Governing in the Water Sector	<u>DELWP</u> , 2020	This guide describes the administration and governance framework for water corporations, the Victorian Environmental Water Holder (VEWH), the Victorian Catchment Management Council (VCMC) and catchment management authorities (CMAs).
International Association for Public Participation Core Values and Spectrum of Public Participation	<u>IAP2</u> , Date unknown	IAP2 is the peak international body for the community and stakeholder engagement sector. IAP2's Core Values for engagement professionals define the expectations and aspirations of good engagement. Public Participation Spectrum sets out levels of engagement and the associated promise.
Charter of Consultation	EPA Victoria (2021)	EPA's commitment to consultation with Victorians under section 53 of the <i>Environment Protection Act 2017</i> . It outlines key parts of their laws that require or may benefit from consultation and describes how EPA may undertake such consultation.

Definitions

CALD	Culturally and linguistically diverse
Community	A group of people living in the same place or having a shared interest.
Community engagement	Fostering ongoing partnerships with our diverse community to plan and deliver our services.
Collaborate	Working together to achieve shared outcomes.
Disadvantage	People or groups in an unfavourable position.
Diverse community	Individuals of different race, ethnicity, religious beliefs, age, socioeconomic status, language, geographical origin, gender and/or sexual orientation.
Engagement	The process of encouraging people to actively participate in the work of an organisation.
Framework	An externally-facing document that make up a department's overarching strategy.
IAP2	International Association for Public Participation, the peak body for the community and stakeholder and engagement sector.
Inclusive	Finding ways to ensure no groups or parties involved in a process are excluded.
Objectives	An aim or a goal in which efforts are directed.
Resilient communities	The sustained ability of a community to utilise available resources to respond to, withstand and recover from adverse situations.