

Taking the pain out of community planning

How to engage your community

Setting the scene



“Democracy is the only system capable of reflecting the humanist premise of equilibrium or balance. The key to its secret is the **involvement of the citizen.**”

John Ralston Saul

“Without glasnost there is not, and there cannot be, democratism, the political creativity of the masses and their **participation in management.**”

Mikhail Gorbachev

“**Citizen participation is a device** whereby public officials induce nonpublic individuals to act in a way the officials desire.”

Daniel P Moynihan

The changing landscape

- » Queensland: Finance, Plans and Reporting Regulation 2010
- » New Zealand: Local Government Act 2002
- » New South Wales: Local Government Amendment (Planning and Reporting Act) 2009



Queensland

Local Government (Finance, Plans and Reporting) Regulation 2010

Subordinate Legislation 2010 No. 124

made under the

Local Government Act 2009

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Why else would we engage?



- » Community ownership of decisions
- » “Quick-check” for Councils
- » Community understands decisions
- » Better outcomes for communities and Councils

Barriers to good engagement



- » Community cynicism about the commitment to engagement
- » A poorly designed process
- » Not closing the loop and showing people how their feedback made a difference
- » Reaching the right audiences
- » Maintaining consistency in communication with your community
- » Politics
- » Resources – time and money

The engagement process



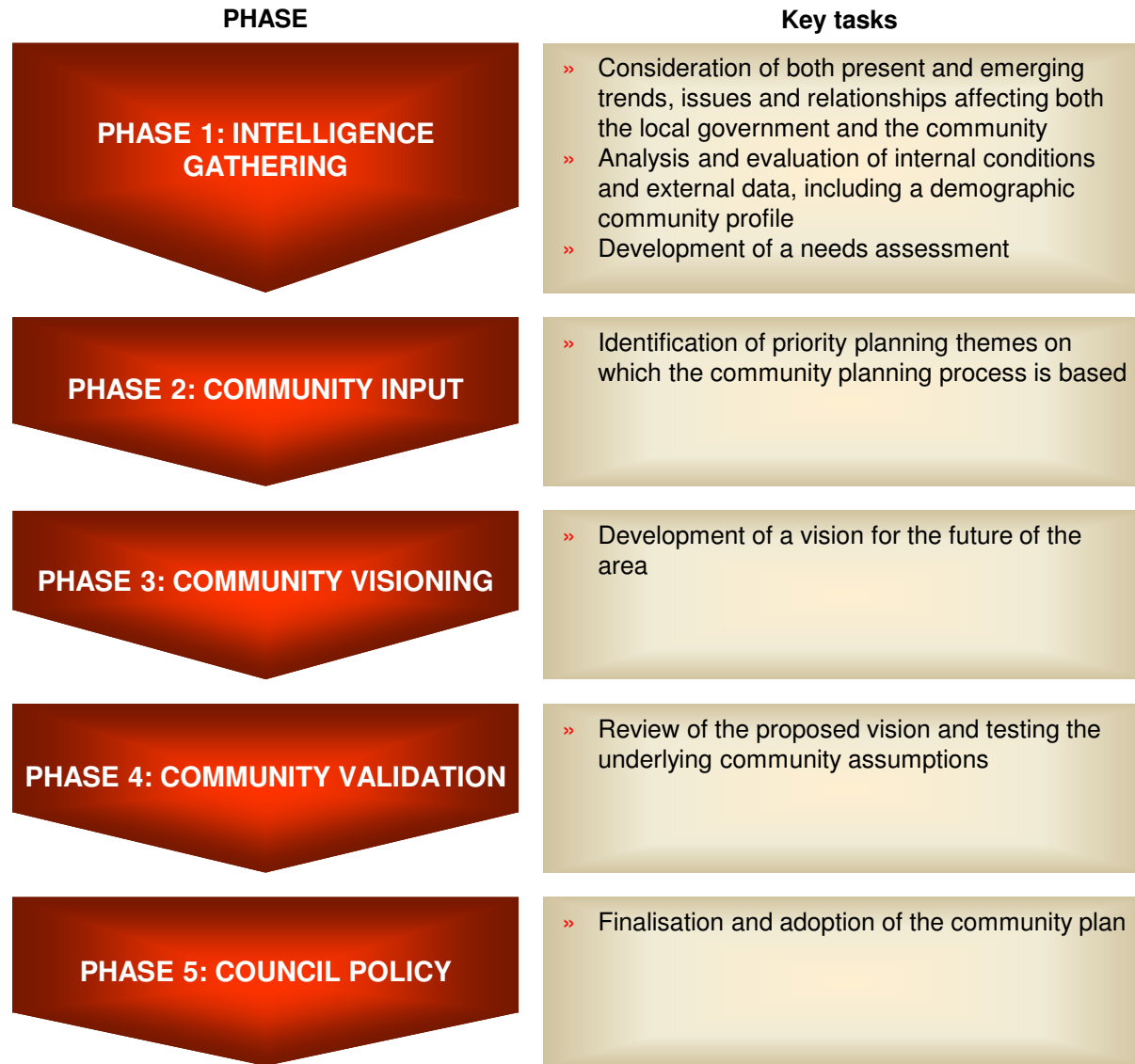
1. Define your project
2. Define your target audiences
3. Identify the level of engagement
4. Choose your tools
5. Invite your audiences
6. Implement and feedback

1. Define your project



- » What is it? A community plan, property development, infrastructure project?
- » Outline the planning process and timeframe
- » Identify points when key decisions are made
- » Acknowledge the negotiables and non-negotiables

Community plan development



2. Define your target audience



- » Ask yourself some questions...
 - Who are you talking to?
 - Who is going to be affected by this project?
 - Is there a demographic or demographic focus?

- » Be aware of all subcultures in your community: young people, NESB, the passionate people, Indigenous groups

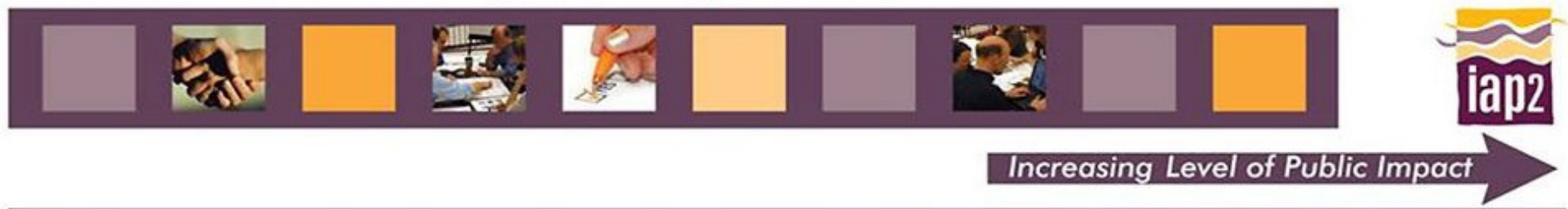
- » It's very important to know the people in your community and to be able to contact them
 - How do you find the people willing/eager to participate?
 - How do you avoid the vocal minority taking over?
 - How can you be sure that you have heard from a good representation of the community?

3. Identify the level of engagement



- » International Association of Public Participation
- » Define how community engagement is going to inform or influence the decision-making process
- » How much of a say does the community have?
- » Don't call it consultation if the community's views are not going to influence the decision

IAP2's Public Participation Spectrum



	Inform	Consult	Involve	Collaborate	Empower
Public participation goal	To provide the public with balanced and objective information to assist them in understanding the problem, alternatives, opportunities and/or solutions.	To obtain public feedback on analysis, alternatives and/or decisions.	To work directly with the public throughout the process to ensure that public concerns and aspirations are consistently understood and considered.	To partner with the public in each aspect of the decision including the development of alternatives and the identification of the preferred solution.	To place final decision-making in the hands of the public.

4. Choose your tools



- » Two main considerations: time and money
- » Workshops with butchers' paper are time-consuming and expensive
- » Visioning: needs to be interactive
 - Workshops
 - Drop-in sessions
 - World Cafes
 - SpeakOuts
- » Options analysis: can be one-on-one
 - Displays and feedback forms
 - Surveys
 - Online forums

Web 2.0 and engagement



- » Useful for engaging with hard-to-reach groups
- » Another tool to build into the process
- » Can appear to be low-cost but someone needs to manage it
- » Be very aware of how communities are using the Internet to drive their campaigns

5. Invite your audiences



- » Use every possible channel
- » Personal invitation works best if you have a good database
- » If you want a certain group there, invite them
- » Saturate your community
 - Personal letters (and even phone calls)
 - Media
 - Newsletters and web
 - Go via community groups and local Councillors
 - Advertising

6. Implement and feedback



- » Use volunteers from Council to implement engagement tools
- » Facilitation training is very important
- » Always register participants so you can follow up
- » The results of the engagement must be made public and promoted
- » Transparency is key

A final word



Yes Prime Minister: Sir Humphrey on public polling:

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZgyKpkLpccE>