

WARRINGAH COUNCIL COMMUNITY CONSULTATION TOOLKIT



Warringah Council



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Introduction

TOOLKIT BACKGROUND

The purpose of the Community Consultation Toolkit is to provide Council staff with practical guidance on ‘how to’ undertake different types of community consultation. It outlines the tasks that should be undertaken and provides suggested approaches, including more innovative approaches that encourage community involvement.

The Toolkit is part of a total Consultation Framework developed by Council to encourage effective consultation with the community and internally. The Consultation Framework includes the following key components:

- ☞ A **community consultation policy** to provide the broad framework and policy direction for consultation.
- ☞ A **consultation strategy** to provide clear directions on consultation process and systems (with the community and internally).
- ☞ A **community consultation matrix** to provide guidance on determining the appropriate type and level of consultation with the community.
- ☞ This **consultation toolkit** to provide specific information and advice on ‘how to’ undertake different types of consultation with the community.

The overall purpose of the Consultation Framework is to encourage a commitment and consistency across Council to undertaking effective and appropriate consultation with the community and internally.

In addition, the Consultation Framework:

- ☞ Helps Council to achieve its corporate commitment, ie:
- ☞ “encourage community participation through all of Council’s processes, policies and work practices” Warringah Plan 2000-2003.
- ☞ Gives recognition to the importance of consulting and involving the community and other staff in relevant aspects of Council’s planning and operations.
- ☞ Provides practical guidance in achieving legislative and Council requirements regarding consultation.
- ☞ Provides guidelines and protocols for ensuring appropriate and effective approaches to consultation.

LINK TO THE CONSULTATION MATRIX

The Community Consultation Matrix was developed to assist staff to determine the level and type of consultation required for different situations. It is a flexible document that recognises the diversity of projects and activities undertaken across Council. It allows staff the scope to assess their project/ activity/ issue and through the Matrix determine the best consultation approach.

This Consultation Toolkit is an extension of the Community Consultation Matrix. Firstly, it reinforces the four levels of community participation recommended in the Matrix, ie:

- ☞ Informing
- ☞ Seeking Information
- ☞ Involving
- ☞ Partnerships

Introduction

Secondly, the Toolkit provides information and advice on ‘how to’ undertake each of the consultation types listed in the Community Consultation Matrix (for each level of community participation). Using this information, staff can determine their approach to a type of consultation. They can also determine how realistic it is to undertake the type of consultation relative to the availability of resources and skills.

Thirdly, the Toolkit provides more specific guidelines and protocols to enable ‘good practice’ in consultations. The Toolkit clearly states ‘what should be done’ to achieve effective consultations.

In summary, the Community Consultation Matrix says ‘what to do’ and the Consultation Toolkit says ‘how it can be done’.

HOW TO USE THE TOOLKIT

The Consultation Toolkit should be used in conjunction with the Community Consultation Matrix, which is provided in Attachment 1. The steps to take in using these documents are summarised below.

Step 1 - Level of Participation

☞ Use the Community Consultation Matrix to determine the level of participation that is required. The level of participation could be informing, seeking information, involving or partnerships, depending on the level of impact.

Step 2 - Type of Consultation

☞ Use the Community Consultation Matrix to determine the type of consultation that is required. Suggested types of consultation are included in a matrix linked to the ‘level of impact’ of an issue/ project, eg high impact Warringah wide, low impact local.

Step 3 - Guidelines and Protocols

☞ Consider the broad guidelines and protocols that are included in this Consultation Toolkit. The guidelines and protocols relate to a range of different types of consultation, reflect Council policy and provide valuable resource information.

Step 4 - Consultation Approach

☞ Use the suggested approach and helpful hints in the Toolkit for the chosen type of consultation to determine the best approach to undertake. Give consideration to resource and skill levels.

Step 5 - Consultation Action Plan

☞ Use the Consultation Plan pro forma provided in Attachment 2 to develop an Action Plan for the chosen type of consultation. This includes allocating resources and setting timeframes.

Step 6 – Implementation

☞ Undertake the consultation approach developed.

Step 7 - Monitoring and Evaluation

☞ Monitor and modify the approach taken throughout the consultation as required. For example, the type of consultation may need to change if the level of an issue changes, ie if an issue that was considered to be low impact becomes higher impact, the level of consultation should increase or vary accordingly.

Consultati Consultation Guidelines

PROTOCOLS

There are a number of Council protocols that need to be taken into consideration when undertaking consultation. The protocols for different types of consultation are as follows and are also outlined in the 'how to' sections:

Written Correspondence

- ☞ Written correspondence that refers to Council policy or makes a decision or commitment on behalf of Council must be endorsed by your Service Unit Manager and Director.
- ☞ All correspondence received by Council from the community or other stakeholders should be responded to within 5 days for Mayoral correspondence and within 10 days for all other correspondence.

Pamphlets and Leaflets

- ☞ Pamphlets and leaflets should be recorded on Council's publications register.
- ☞ All pamphlets and leaflets must be endorsed by your Service Unit Manager.

Letter Box Drop

- ☞ Ward Councillors should be made aware of any material that is being distributed to people within their ward.
- ☞ Any material distributed to the community should be clearly defined, including the logo and design consistent with the Council's image.

Media Release

- ☞ All media releases are to be endorsed by Council's Communications Unit and your Service Unit Manager.
- ☞ Any reference to Council policy or the views of a Councillor or senior management are to be endorsed by your Director or the General Manager.

Information Displays and Public Exhibitions

- ☞ Any displays or material should be clearly defined as belonging to Warringah Council, including the logo and design consistent with Council's image.

Community Surveys

- ☞ Community surveys that relate to the whole of Warringah or a priority issue should be endorsed by the Senior Management Group.
- ☞ Relevant ward councillors should be provided with a copy of community surveys prior to distribution (to enable comment).

Hotline/ Phone-in

- ☞ All hotline/ phone-ins must be endorsed by your Director.

Consultation Guidelines

Community Meetings (public meetings, workshops, targeted meetings).

- ☞ Elected members should be made aware of all meetings and workshops that involve the broad community or relate to a project of ward or council significance. Advice is to be via a memo to all Councillors and the Executive Team.
- ☞ Councillor diaries should be checked when arranging a relevant meeting/ workshop. Meetings and workshops should not clash with Council meetings or key Council events.
- ☞ A summary of meeting notes should be sent to participants and Councillors within 7 days (received within 10 days of the meeting), to maintain the interest and to show a professional approach.

Advisory Committees

- ☞ Proposals for formal Committees of Management must be reported to Council for endorsement.
- ☞ Council should be advised of other less formal committees established.

Joint Ventures

- ☞ Any proposal for a joint venture (financial or otherwise) must be reported to Council for endorsement before proceeding.

Accessibility

VENUES

Accessibility is to be an essential consideration of any consultation. Warringah Council's policy is to ensure that all people in the community have the opportunity to influence Council policy and decision making through involvement in consultation. There are a number of key requirements in achieving accessible consultation and these are listed below.

- ☞ Venues for public and community meetings must be accessible. This includes:
 - ☞ Physically accessible meeting rooms, such as the provision of pathways and ramps to cater for people with a disability.
 - ☞ The provision of amenities for people with a disability (eg wheelchair accessible toilets).
 - ☞ Good lighting and pathways to provide safe access for all participants.
 - ☞ Parking for people with disabilities

- ☞ Physically accessible venues in Warringah include:
 - ☞ Tramshed Community Centre
 - ☞ Allambie Heights Community Centre (back room only)
 - ☞ A number of service clubs and senior citizen clubs.
 - ☞

Note that this list will be updated following a review of venues (being undertaken).

Language

- ☞ Language barriers should be taken into consideration when preparing any written material. In particular, consideration should be given to:
 - ☞ The need for interpretation of material in different languages to cater for people of cultural and linguistically diverse backgrounds.
 - ☞ The need to include signs and printed material in other languages as part of displays.

- ☞ Language barriers should be taken into consideration when consulting with groups in person. In particular, consideration should be given to:
 - ☞ Involving interpreters in meetings in order to communicate with particular groups.
 - ☞ Considering cultural values and constraints.

Visual Needs

- ☞ An emphasis should be placed on making material and presentations as visually appealing and accessible as possible. This includes:
 - ☞ Ensuring good lighting in and around venues (also addressing safety issues).
 - ☞ Holding meetings in venues that have good acoustics, so that visually impaired people can clearly hear what is being said.
 - ☞ Producing material with readable print, eg leaflets, forms, overheads.

Hearing Needs

- ☞ Consideration should be given to the specific needs of people who are hearing impaired. This could include providing hearing loops.

Accessibility

Support Needs

- ☞ Parents with young children should be given the opportunity to participate in consultations. This can be achieved by:
 - ☞ Providing childcare for participants of meetings.
 - ☞ Holding meetings with children invited. For example, a meeting could be held with parents during a playgroup session (recognising that the children will create some distraction).

- ☞ The need for transport support should be taken into consideration, eg:
 - ☞ Providing a transport shuttle for older adults or young people who may not have private transport to a meeting.
 - ☞ Booking a community bus to take people on a site tour, also using this as an opportunity for people to interact.

When promoting a meeting or workshop, potential participants should be invited to advise the meeting organiser of any special needs that they may have, including the above.

Promotion

Why Promote?

Promotion is essential to achieve effective community consultation. People need to be aware of a meeting or activity in order to attend, and therefore consideration should be given to the best method of promotion.

A targeted meeting will not require broad promotion. Instead promotion is via telephone contact to one representative (who will then arrange the meeting) or written correspondence to the participants. Larger open meetings, workshops displays and exhibitions on the other hand will require a commitment of resources to broad promotion.

Types of Promotion

There are various ways to promote a broad community consultation. Some are more effective than others as indicated by the list of different types of promotion below and on the following page.

Generally more than one type of promotion is required to increase the likelihood of raising awareness and interest within the community. The level of promotion should reflect the degree of impact of an issue. For example, where an issue or project is likely to have a high impact on the community, a greater number of promotion types should be undertaken to ensure as many people as possible are aware of the meeting, workshop, display or exhibition.

Consultation Type	LEVEL OF EFFECTIVENESS
Notice in local newspaper, including Mayors Message.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Has broad distribution and potential to be read by a number of people. • Not all people in the community will read the local paper or the message in the paper, and therefore it should not be relied on as the only method of promotion.
Notice in newsletter, eg Council newsletter or the newsletter of a community organisation such as a school, church or advocacy group.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • High likelihood of being read by the target group, eg parents, church members. • Good as an additional method of promotion and where the consultation is targeting a particular area or group in the community.
Insert in local newspaper, newsletter, rate notice or other correspondence.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Potential to 'stand out' more through innovative design and colour. • Risk that insert will not be read if seen as 'junk mail'.
Letter box drop of notice or correspondence.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Less personal and therefore may not be read by resident. • Could be seen as 'junk mail'. • Really needs to be clearly identified as a Warringah Council notice and preferably in a Warringah Council official envelope to be seen as important.
Posters in a public place, eg library, community centre, shopping centre.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Large colourful posters can draw attention to details of a meeting etc. • Posters need to be located in a prominent position to be seen. • There is a risk that posters will be competing with numerous other posters and not be seen.
A banner in a public place, eg shopping centre, road bridge.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A banner can be effective if located in a prominent position, eg near traffic lights or a shopping centre. • The cost of a banner means that this method is only really relevant for major consultations. Banners could be made through public art as part of earlier consultations and placed in council facilities to minimise costs.

Achieving Representative Consultation

THE MEANING OF REPRESENTATIVE

In the context of community consultation, the term representative broadly means involving people who represent the characteristics of the target population group. For example:

- ☞ If an issue or project relates to the whole of Warringah, then the consultation should include people from all age groups and types of characteristic, eg lower income, employed, not employed, people with disabilities, people from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds and Indigenous communities.
- ☞ If the issue or project relates to one age group or type of person, such as youth or older adults, then the people consulted should reflect those characteristics.

In relation to surveys, representative consultation requires further consideration of the validity of the survey in relation to sample size and method of selection, and the level of response to the survey. This is discussed further on the following page.

A consultation program needs to be as representative as possible, but also reflecting the level of issue or the importance of a project. For example:

- ☞ An issue that relates to the whole of Warringah and is considered to be a priority, should include statistically valid and highly representative consultation.
- ☞ A consultation program that relates to a small group of users of a facility or service may not need to be statistically valid, but should endeavour to involve as many people as possible.

How Representative Are Types of Consultation?

Representative consultation will sometimes require undertaking both qualitative and quantitative types consultation, particularly where an issue is higher priority or relates to the whole of Warringah. A broad description is provided on the following page.

Qualitative Consultation

Qualitative consultation refers to the 'quality' involvement of people through personal meetings and workshops, where the input will not be statistically valid but will provide a better understanding of the views and expectations of the community.

Qualitative consultation can not be statistically valid, as it is not measuring the quantity of a response. It is instead gaining a range of views and ideas. However, it can be representative by involving a range of people who reflect the characteristics of the broader community or the target group.

Quantitative Consultation

Quantitative consultation refers to obtaining data to 'measure' the response of the community regarding an issue, need or view. This is generally undertaken through community and user surveys (by mail, telephone or interview). The representativeness and validity of a survey is briefly discussed below.

Survey Representativeness

The book *Research Methods for Leisure and Tourism A Practical Guide* by A J Veal, 1997, adequately outlines how a survey can be more representative. This book is available through the Warringah Council Library Services. Chapter 12 is particularly relevant.

However, to provide a broad understanding of survey representativeness, key points raised in Veal's book are briefly outlined below.

Achieving Representative Consultation

1. To be representative, a survey must undertake a process of random sampling. Random sampling aims to minimise bias and is described as follows:
 “In random sampling all members of the population have an equal chance of inclusion in the sample”.
 The ‘population’ refers to “the total category of subjects which is the focus of attention in a particular research project”. For example the total population in Warringah, or the population in a Council ward, or a particular group such as all youth in Warringah, or a group of service users.
2. The level of validity of a response will depend on the size of the sample. Veal states that it is the absolute size of the sample that is important, not its size relative to the population. The belief that the sample size should be based on a proportion of the population size (eg five or ten percent) is incorrect. Information that will assist in determining the representativeness of a sample size is provided on the following page.
3. The sample response, ie the proportion of people who responded to the survey from the ‘population’ should not be too low. Veal does not state an acceptable figure, but implies that 30% or less is becoming questionable and responses should aim for 50% or more to be of value.

Information on Sample Size

The precision of a survey sample, ie the extent the findings from a sample precisely reflect the population, is based on the idea of probability and ‘level of confidence’. This is quite complex and is best explained in Veal’s book rather than in this practical guide. What people do need to know is the confidence intervals that relate to different sample sizes (as developed by statisticians). A confidence interval is the likely plus or minus variation of a response. For example, for a sample size of 500 and if 30% of people give a particular answer (such as ‘use the beach twice a week’) there is a confidence level of plus or minus 4.0. This means that the population participation in this activity is likely to be between the range of 26% and 34%. The table of confidence levels for different sample sizes from 50 to 10,000 is outlined in the table below.

Confidence intervals related to sample size:

Sample Size	Percentage found from sample (results)					
	50%	40 or 60%	30 or 70%	20 or 80%	10 or 90%	5 or 95%
50	13.9	13.6	12.7	11.1	8.3	*
80	11.0	10.7	10.0	8.8	6.6	*
100	9.8	9.6	9.0	7.8	5.9	4.3
150	8.0	7.8	7.3	6.4	4.8	3.5
200	6.9	6.8	6.3	5.5	4.2	3.0
250	6.2	6.1	5.7	5.0	3.7	2.7
300	5.7	5.5	5.2	4.5	3.4	2.5
400	4.9	4.8	4.5	3.9	2.9	2.1
500	4.4	4.3	4.0	3.5	2.6	1.9
750	3.6	3.5	3.3	2.9	2.1	1.6
1000	3.1	3.0	2.8	2.5	1.9	1.3
2000	2.2	2.1	2.0	1.7	1.3	1.0
4000	1.5	1.5	1.4	1.2	0.9	0.7
10000	1.0	1.0	0.9	0.8	0.6	0.4

* Confidence interval >5

Source: Veal AJ 1997 *Research Methods for Leisure and Tourism A Practical Guide* (page 211)

The sample size selected should reflect the required level of precision in the results and therefore the level of impact of a particular issue, and also the available budget.

Information

Information On Contacts & Resources

CONTACTS

- ☞ Information on contacts for consultations (ie details of community groups or individuals to make contact with) can be obtained through:
 - ☞ Council's Community Directory

Resources

Resources that are available to be used within Council for consultations are listed below, with details of the responsible Council Unit.

Printing

- ☞ Basic printing (A4 and A3) black and white and colour through the Print Room.

Distribution

- ☞ All postage mail should be distributed through the Mail Room.
- ☞ Details of mailing addresses (eg around a facility or broader area) using Council's Geographic Information System, can be obtained through Information Technology.

Consultation Advice

- ☞ Communications Unit for advice on promotion, information or media release material.
- ☞ Strategy Unit for advice on holding workshops and community meetings.
- ☞ Members of the Consultation Expert Panel (to be established as part of the Consultation Framework) for general advice on consultation, including surveys, workshops and innovative approaches.

Meeting And Workshop Checklist

In holding a workshop or a meeting, there are a number of administrative items that need to be arranged, including:

- ☞ Organising a venue
- ☞ Organising speakers where appropriate
- ☞ Forwarding invitations
- ☞ Organising catering
- ☞ Preparing materials, eg overhead, whiteboard etc.
- ☞ Preparing the venue

To assist in this organisation, a checklist developed by the Council's Strategy Unit is provided in Attachment 3.

How To Inform

WRITTEN CORRESPONDENCE

Personally addressed letter informing residents or organisations of a project, issue, service or action.

The Purpose

- ☞ To formally respond to written correspondence from a resident or organisation.
- ☞ To formally advise a resident or organisation of a project, issue, service, action or other information.

Key Actions

Content

- ☞ Address the basic 'who, what, where, when, why' as appropriate. For example:
 - ☞ **who** is the issue or matter affecting or **who** is involved
 - ☞ **what** is the decision, issue or **what** does the recipient need to do
 - ☞ **where** will meetings be held or **where** will information be available
 - ☞ **when** is an activity taking place or **when** is a meeting being held
 - ☞ **why** is council changing policy or **why** is council providing advice
 - ☞ **how** can the recipient become involved further
- ☞ Provide staff contact details where appropriate (ie name and phone number). There should generally be an opportunity for a personal or written response from the resident or organisation.
- ☞ Include the appropriate sign off for the correspondence, eg Mayor, General manager or Service Unit Manager.

Helpful Hints

- ☞ Use 'plain English'.
- ☞ Check that your letter is easy to understand (if in doubt ask someone else to read it).
- ☞ Avoid using 'jargon'.
- ☞ Check that your letter has all the right facts, eg the correct dates and times of meetings.

Distribution

- ☞ Include supporting information/ attachments where appropriate.
- ☞ Forward the signed letter by mail. Where a letter is faxed, an original should also be forwarded.
- ☞ Place a copy of the letter on Council file.

Protocols

- ☞ Written correspondence that refers to Council policy or makes a decision or commitment on behalf of Council must be endorsed by your Service Unit Manager and Director.
- ☞ All correspondence received by Council from the community or other stakeholders should be responded to within 5 days for Mayoral correspondence and within 10 days for all other correspondence.

Items To Consider

- ☞ Have you considered possible language barriers?
- ☞ Have you checked Council's protocols on who should sign the correspondence?
- ☞ Does your supervisor/ manager need to authorise the correspondence?

The Costs

Allow for material, printing and mailing costs.

How To Inform

IN PERSON MEETING

The Purpose

Informal or semi formal discussion either one to one or in a small group.

- ☞ To enable discussion of an issue or project that relates to the person/ people concerned.
- ☞ To provide or obtain information at a more personal level.

Key Actions

Organisation

For a meeting that is organised in advance:

- ☞ Arrange the meeting through telephone contact, clearly outlining the purpose of the meeting.
- ☞ Follow up with correspondence to confirm the meeting details and its purpose.

CONTENT

- ☞ Prepare for the meeting, outlining information that is sought or is to be presented, and the key questions to ask.

Helpful Hints:

- ☞ Where meetings are 'on the spot'/ not pre arranged (eg a community member has arrived at council requesting to speak to someone), still take a minute or two to gather thoughts and prepare key points ready for the discussion.
- ☞ Take any supporting material such as reports or maps to the meeting to assist in discussions.

Hold Meeting

- ☞ Give the meeting participant/s your business card for further contact and to formalise the meeting.
- ☞ Hold the meeting in a space that is relatively quiet and where there are unlikely to be interruptions.
- ☞ Take care not to make commitments at the meeting that require Council endorsement or are policy related.

Feedback

- ☞ Document the meeting discussions and where appropriate provide the meeting participants with a copy of the notes.
- ☞ Formally advise other Council staff of any items discussed that could be an issue for Council or relate to another work area or project.
- ☞ Place a copy of the meeting notes on the relevant Council file.

Items To Consider

- ☞ Should another staff member be present if the issue is contentious or the participants could infer a council policy decision?
- ☞ Have you adopted an open and accountable approach, eg providing information and access to reports sought?

The Costs

- Minimal printing and postage costs.

How To Inform

PAMPHLET OR LEAFLET

A leaflet designed to provide information on a particular item.

The Purpose

- ☞ To present more complex or detailed information in an easy to read format.
- ☞ To create or promote a desired image for an activity, event or service.

Key Activities

Content

- ☞ Determine the main messages of the publication.
- ☞ Develop topic headings and key points.
- ☞ Provide all essential information eg 'who, what, where, when, why and how'. For example:
 - ☞ **who** the information is relevant to
 - ☞ **what** is happening, eg details of an activity or service
 - ☞ **where** the activity or service will be held
 - ☞ **when** the activity or service will take place
 - ☞ **why** the activity or service will be beneficial
 - ☞ **how** people can participate in the activity or service or obtain further information
- ☞ Include contact details where appropriate.

Helpful Hints:

- ☞ Be clear and concise (use 'plain English').
- ☞ Include all essential information, yet don't try to say too much.
- ☞ Understand and reflect the 'language' of the target market.
- ☞ Limit the amount of text for readability.

Design

- ☞ Design the 'lay out' and size of the pamphlet/ leaflet (using available computer software).
- ☞ Design heading styles and positioning.
- ☞ Include sketches, cartoons, graphs, charts and photographs for visual appeal.
- ☞ Obtain feedback on the design and content, including from Communications staff.

Helpful Hints:

- Obtain advice from or involve staff with computer (publication design) skills.
- Utilise scanners and digital cameras where available and appropriate (for visuals).
- Ensure design style is consistent with budget availability, ie consider printing costs.
- Make sure the font is not too small, ie it should be readable.

Distribution

- ☞ Before printing and distribution, obtain approval from the Service Unit Manager.
- ☞ Determine the number of pamphlets/ leaflets required.
- ☞ Arrange printing of the pamphlet/ leaflet either through Council resources or externally for more 'up market' material, eg 'glossy' brochure.
- ☞ Arrange distribution/ postage.
- ☞ Register on Council's publications register.
- ☞ Circulate a copy of the pamphlet/ leaflet to all Councillors and Senior Management for their information (with an attached memo).

How To Inform

Helpful Hints:

- ☞ Consider using ecological sustainable materials and printers, eg recycled paper.
- ☞ Consider opportunities to include leaflet/ pamphlet with rate notices or other newsletters.
- ☞ Consider inserting pamphlet/ leaflet in local paper.
- ☞ Endeavour to distribute through schools where material is relevant to young people or families.
- ☞ Letter box drops are often affordable, although ideally material would be placed in a Council envelope to avoid being seen as 'junk mail' (noting that this is higher cost).
- ☞ Recipients can be selected and mail can be personalised using Council's Geographical Information System (GIS) through the Information Technology Service Unit.

Protocols

- ☞ Pamphlets and leaflets should be recorded on Council's publications register.
- ☞ All pamphlets and leaflets must be endorsed by your Service Unit Manager.

Items To Consider

- ☞ Have you considered language barriers or people with sight impairments?
- ☞ Have you considered linking with other Council Service Units (for combined messages)?
- ☞ Have you checked that the leaflet/ pamphlet complies with Council's corporate image (eg logo position and design, lay out etc)?
- ☞ Has the pamphlet/ leaflet been authorised by Communications Unit?
- ☞ Do you have a communications publication number on the leaflet/ pamphlet?
- ☞ Does the pamphlet/ leaflet need to be endorsed by the Senior Management Group or Council?
- ☞ Have you allowed sufficient time for printing and distribution?

The Costs

- ☞ Allow for printing and mailing costs.
- ☞ Professional design costs may need to be considered for 'up market' material.

How To Inform

LETTER BOX DROP

The distribution of information to residents via their letter boxes.

The Purpose

- ☞ To inform residents of an issue, project, action or other matter.

Key Actions

Content

- ☞ Prepare the material (letter, leaflet, survey etc).
- ☞ Include details of who, what, where, when, why, how (refer Written Correspondence and Pamphlet or Leaflet).

Helpful Hints:

- The material should be clearly identified as an important message from Council (so that it is not seen as junk mail).
- Material in a council envelope, clearly identifying the project or issue is more likely to be read.

Distribution

- ☞ Determine the appropriate spread of distribution (ie streets, randomly selected houses, suburbs etc).
- ☞ Arrange the distribution.

Helpful Hints:

- Letter box drops through Australia Post are generally effective and affordable.
- Sporting or community clubs wanting to raise funds will often undertake the task, although this may not be as reliable as Australia Post.
- Give at least two weeks notice for the distribution.
- Best not to do letter box drops during holiday periods.
- Consider including a 'reply paid' envelope if seeking a response.

Protocols

- ☞ Ward Councillors should be made aware of any material that is being distributed to people within their ward.
- ☞ Any material distributed to the community should be clearly defined, including the logo and design consistent with the Council's image.

Items To Consider

- ☞ Does your material clearly identify that it is from Council?
- ☞ Have you obtained the appropriate approvals?
- ☞ Have you considered language barriers or people with sight impairments?

The Costs

- ☞ Allow for the cost to prepare material.
- ☞ Allow for letter box drop cost.
- ☞ Allow for 'reply paid' cost (if appropriate).

How To Inform

NOTICES

Paid or free notice of an event, project or meeting, in a local newspaper or a targeted publication such as a school newsletter.

The Purpose

- To inform the community about an event, meeting, project or other matter.

Key Actions

Organisation

- For a paid notice in a local newspaper or other advertisement, liaise with the organisation to arrange publication. In particular:
 - Provide information on the size of the notice and the preferred page and column location.
 - Design the notice, including set out and font.
 - Forward the notice to enable a written quotation.
 - Confirm acceptance of the quotation and arrangements in writing.
- For a notice in the Mayor's message, liaise with Council's Communications Unit. In particular:
 - Discuss the available space and wording of the message.
 - Prepare the information.
 - Provide the information to the Communications Unit for modification and inclusion.
- For a free notice, eg in a school newsletter, make personal contact with the organisation to seek inclusion in the newsletter or other material. In particular:
 - Agree on the size of the notice.
 - Design the notice, including set out and font.
 - Forward the notice for inclusion, either by email, fax or in writing (as agreed).

Content

Prepare the information, giving details of:

- who** the information is relevant to
- what** is happening, eg details of an activity or service
- where** the activity or service will be held
- when** the activity or service will take place
- why** the activity or service will be beneficial
- how** people can participate in the activity or service or obtain further information

Helpful Hints:

- Use 'plain English'.
- Keep the message simple and relatively short.
- Provide details that will enable participation, eg when, where.
- Include contact details so that people can contact you for more information.

Items To Consider

- Have you submitted the notice in time for its distribution, ie at least one week prior to publication?
- Has the notice been endorsed by your Service Unit manager?
- Have you checked whether the notice needs to be approved by the Communications Unit or senior management?

The Costs

- Allow for advertising cost for notices in local newspapers (additional to Mayor's message).

How To Inform

MEDIA RELEASE

News story in the local paper or other media eg radio, metropolitan newspapers, magazine.

The Purpose

- ☞ To advise the broad community of an activity, issue, action, service or project.
- ☞ To raise the profile of an issue and generate debate or interest.

Key Action

Content

- ☞ Write the story, including information on who, what, where, when, why and how as appropriate (as for 'written correspondence').

Helpful Hints:

- Write in a creative and interesting, although easy to read style. Aim to generate interest but 'keep it simple'.
- Check that you have included accurate facts and quotations and that they are consistent with Council policy.
- Liaise with Communications Unit to arrange a photo shoot or send quality photos to increase the 'human interest' appeal of the story.
- Include a contact name and telephone number.

Feedback

- ☞ Enable feedback from the community by including contact details or a process for submissions/ input.

Distribution

- ☞ Forward the media release following approval from your Service Unit Manager and Communications Unit.

Helpful Hints:

- ☞ Personal contact with the various media organisations may generate greater interest in the story or information.
- ☞ Sometimes it helps to also take out a paid advertisement.

Protocols

- ☞ All media releases are to be endorsed by Council's Communications Unit and your Service Unit Manager.
- ☞ Any reference to Council policy or the views of a Councillor or senior management are to be endorsed by your Director or the General Manager.

Items To Consider

- ☞ Has your media release been appropriately approved (eg by Council's Communication's Unit or Senior Management)?
- ☞ Have you **also** used other methods of communication? Not all residents and stakeholders will read newspapers or listen to the radio, and there is no guarantee that your story will be 'taken up' by the media.
- ☞ Have you checked newspaper deadlines for media releases or advertisements?

The Costs

- ☞ The greatest cost is time and staff resources in preparing the media release.
- ☞ There could be related advertising costs

How To Inform

INFORMATION DISPLAYS

The display of information (visual and/or auditory) either on-site or at a prominent public location.

The Purpose

- ☞ To inform the community of a proposal, action or service through the effective presentation of material, eg. plans, concept designs, posters, videos, and products.

Key Action

Content

- ☞ Determine and collect all information that should be included in the display, eg plans, documents, photographs, videos, symbols/ logos and products.

Helpful Hints:

- ☞ Consider the market that you are targeting and the type of information that will be of relevance to them.
- ☞ Where possible, use visual and auditory methods to cater for people with hearing or sight impairments.
- ☞ Include items that will generate interest, such as a mascot or a video with topical information.

Presentation

- ☞ Determine the best way to present the information, eg on a board, as a mobile display (bus/motor vehicle/trailer), within a building or marquis etc.
- ☞ Book presentation space if required, eg Display Area in Civic Centre.

Helpful Hints:

- ☞ Use large print on information boards, eg large headings and readable summaries.
- ☞ Make display colourful and interesting, eg include colour photos, maps, plans, sketches, logos etc.
- ☞ For broad community matters, locate display in a public place that generates high levels of pedestrian traffic, eg shopping centre, beach reserve.
- ☞ For on-site displays, locate the information at a central meeting point, eg building or car park.
- ☞ Include 'experiential' activities where appropriate, eg 'make a worm farm' for recycling or 'try an exercise' for physical activity.
- ☞ Students or community organisations could be involved in handing out materials (to reduce costs if necessary).

The Purpose

- ☞ Any displays or material should be clearly defined as belonging to Warringah Council, including the logo and design consistent with Council's image.

Items To Consider

- ☞ Does any of the information in your display need to be endorsed by Council?
- ☞ Have you provided all relevant information to appropriately inform the community (particularly relating to a proposal)?
- ☞ Have you included contact details so that people can take further action if desired?

The Costs

- ☞ The cost will depend on the approach used, ie an information board will cost less than a display with equipment, materials and related 'experiential' activities.
- ☞ Allow for the cost of preparing material (eg plans, maps, sketches etc, if not already prepared).

How To See

How To Seek Information

SUGGESTION BOX

Provision of a place for customers to lodge ideas and feedback.

The Purpose

- ☞ To enable programs and services to be improved, in response to community ideas and feedback.

Key Action

Set Up

- ☞ Purchase or design a box that is large enough to be seen and will hold responses.
- ☞ Clearly indicate the box is for 'suggestions'.
- ☞ Locate the suggestion box in a prominent location.
- ☞ Provide paper and pens for people to record their suggestions.

Helpful Hints:

- ☞ A front counter or entrance location is likely to be most visible and attract people as they are leaving or entering the facility.
- ☞ Make the box colourful so that it 'stands out'.
- ☞ There should be somewhere nearby for people to sit while they are recording their comments.
- ☞ A sheet with some questions or spaces for comments could prompt more creative responses.
- ☞ The suggestions will generally be anonymous, but the option for recording contact details should be given for people who may want a follow up.

Promotion

- ☞ Promote the existence and location of the suggestion box in any newsletters, other correspondence or notice board.
- ☞ Record the suggestions made each week on a notice board and/ or through newsletters and other correspondence.

Items To Consider

- ☞ How will people know when you have taken their ideas on board, ie is there any way of giving recognition to people and/ or advising people of actions?
- ☞ Have you considered how you can pass the suggestions onto management, ie through a report?

The Costs

- ☞ Allow for the cost of the suggestion box or material.
- ☞ Allow for the cost of related forms.

How To Seek Information

COMMUNITY SURVEY

A structured form that asks specific questions and gathers data/ information, eg a questionnaire used to assess needs, gain feedback or gauge community opinion.

The Purpose

- ☞ To obtain information from a representative sample within the community.
- ☞ To enable a considered response to an issue or item (allowing time and providing adequate background information).

Key Action

Survey Design

- ☞ Determine the broad objectives of the survey, eg
 - ☞ **why** is the survey being undertaken
 - ☞ **what** information is sought
 - ☞ **who** should the survey target
 - ☞ **how** will the information be used
- ☞ Develop the specific survey questions.

Helpful Hints:

- ☞ Each question should have an objective/ purpose.
- ☞ Use 'plain English'.
- ☞ 'Closed' questions are easier to collate than 'open', ie tick box choice of answer.
- ☞ Also allow for individual answers, eg 'other', or 'other comments'.
- ☞ Ideally keep survey short, ie around 12 main questions.
- ☞ Request base information, eg age, gender and location (street, postcode) and for some surveys, ethnicity.
- ☞ Generally do not request financial information (often seen as too personal).
- ☞ To encourage honest response, make survey confidential, ie no name details.
- ☞ State confidentiality if relevant.
- ☞ If sending reminder, number each survey to enable a record of response (number linked to name/ address). Include a short introduction/ background at the commencement of the survey.

Pilot Survey

- ☞ Seek feedback on the draft survey from other Council staff (outside work area) and people in the target group if possible.
- ☞ Modify the survey form as appropriate.

Distribution

Determine the best method of distribution, eg

- ☞ Mail out survey
- ☞ Telephone survey
- ☞ Interview (street, shopping centre, facility etc)
- ☞ Hand out survey (linked to service, facility or workshop)
- ☞ Determine the best method of distribution, eg
 - ☞ Mail out survey
 - ☞ Telephone survey
 - ☞ Interview (street, shopping centre, facility etc)
 - ☞ Hand out survey (linked to service, facility or workshop)
- ☞ For a mail out or telephone survey, establish the survey data base. Some options include:
 - ☞ Obtain name and address through facility or service user records.
 - ☞ Obtain name and address through electoral role.
 - ☞ Obtain details through the Council's Geographic Information System (GIS) available through the Information Technology Service Unit.
 - ☞ Link mail out to rates or newsletter.

How To Seek Information

Distribution Continued

- ☞ For a mail out survey, develop letter/s and reply paid envelopes.
- ☞ Determine how many responses are required.
- ☞ Print and distribute the survey form, letter/s, reply paid envelopes etc (as appropriate).

Helpful Hints:

- ☞ For a major 'mail out' survey or if seeking a higher response, send a reminder letter and another survey to those who did not respond to the first mail out.
- ☞ Obtain at least 300 responses for a statistically representative survey.
- ☞ Obtain around 1,500 responses for a whole of Warringah survey, to reflect population size.
- ☞ For a small user survey, a 50% response could be considered representative.
- ☞ Based on an average 30% response rate, print and send out at least three times the minimum response sought.
- ☞ Consider an A3 folded back to back survey form (not too long, easy to follow and no risk of losing pages).
- ☞ Clearly address reply paid envelopes to Warringah Council and refer to a contact/ Unit.
- ☞ A telephone survey requires specialist communication skills and should generally be undertaken by a market research company.

Collation and Analysis

- ☞ Undertake cross tabulation of data, eg age and gender cross tabulated with a questions such as type of activity participate in.
- ☞ Analyse and summarise the findings.

Helpful Hints:

- The services of a data collation/ market research company are likely to be required for a larger survey (100 or more).

Protocols

- ☞ Community surveys that relate to the whole of Warringah or a priority issue should be endorsed by the Senior Management Group.
- ☞ Relevant ward councillors should be provided with a copy of community surveys prior to distribution (to enable comment).

Items To Consider

- ☞ Have you considered possible language barriers?
- ☞ Have you adopted a personal approach, eg personalised letters or a friendly interview approach?
- ☞ Is there potential to link with other work areas in Council, to reduce the number of surveys undertaken and/ or to reduce costs?
- ☞ Have you undertaken or planned other methods of consultation, to complement the survey?
- ☞ Have you considered how the results will be communicated?

The Costs

- ☞ For mail out surveys, allow for printing and mailing costs.
- ☞ For telephone surveys, allow for market research costs or 'in house' staff and telephone costs.
- ☞ For interviews, allow for printing and interviewer costs.
- ☞ For 'hand out' surveys, allow for printing costs.
- ☞ For all surveys, allow for data collation costs and staff time costs.

How To Seek Information

HOTLINE/PHONE-IN

Time-limited opportunity for the community to make contact and/ or provide feedback in a semi-structured context.

The Purpose

- ☞ To obtain comment or feedback on a topic, eg an issue, proposal, action or project.
- ☞ To give people the opportunity to discuss particular needs, opinions or concerns.

Key Actions

Set Up

- ☞ Determine the telephone contact arrangements, eg establish a designated telephone number, or allocate the task to a market research agency.
- ☞ Provide training if 'in house', eg how to respond to or generate comments.
- ☞ Determine the period of the hotline/ phone in.
- ☞ Develop a question prompt sheet and a system to record responses.

Helpful Hints:

- For broader community phone ins, a telephone number that can be answered by more than one operator is required.
- Undertake the hotline/ phone in after hours as well as during business hours (for people who work or have limited free time during the day).
- Generally do not undertake the hotline/ phone in during school holidays (particularly the Christmas break).

Promotion

- ☞ Advertise the hotline/ phone in.

Helpful Hints:

- ☞ For broad community phone ins, advertise thoroughly via radio, local newspapers, posters and community newsletters.
- ☞ Advertise details on what the topic is about, why people should be involved, who they are ringing, when to ring, what number to ring.

Protocols

- ☞ All hotline/ phone-ins must be endorsed by your Director.

Items To Consider

- ☞ Have you adequately explained the topic and the purpose of the phone-in in your promotions?
- ☞ Have you considered possible language barriers and the need for interpreters?
- ☞ Have you obtained the necessary approval and informed Senior Management and the Councillors.

The Costs

- ☞ If outsourced, the cost of the research company should be factored in (quotes should be obtained).
- ☞ If 'in house' the cost of staffing the phone/s during and outside work times should be factored in.
- ☞ Allow for advertising costs.

How To Seek Information

INVITING SUBMISSIONS

A letter or a media promotion seeking written presentation of views on a proposal, concept or activity.

The Purpose

- ☞ To formally advise people of a proposed direction and seek their views.
- ☞ To involve the community in determining whether a proposal, concept or activity is appropriate.

Key Actions

Organisation

- ☞ Determine the most appropriate approach to seeking written submissions. For example, forwarding a letter inviting a submission will be most appropriate for local issues or directions, ie the redesign of a local park. A media promotion inviting submissions will be more appropriate for a Warringah wide issue. For items that are more contentious or significant, it may be advisable to forward a letter to targeted communities (that are most affected) and also undertake a media promotion seeking submissions from the broader community.
- ☞ For a letter inviting a submission, design the letter and arrange the printing and distribution.
- ☞ For a media promotion inviting a submission, design the notice and arrange for its publication.
- ☞ Prior to forwarding the letter or notice, obtain approval from your Service Unit manager and from senior management where required.

Content

For a letter inviting a submission, include all details of the proposal, concept or action, including:

- ☞ what is proposed and when it will be implemented
 - ☞ how and where people can obtain more detailed information, eg reports
 - ☞ how people can respond and who to
 - ☞ what sort of information should be included in the submission, eg specific details of concerns, who is impacted and why, any issues regarding the process etc
 - ☞ copies of any concept designs/ plans
-
- ☞ For a media promotion inviting submissions, provide all key information about the proposal, concept or action, including:
 - ☞ what is proposed and when it will be implemented
 - ☞ how and where people can obtain more detailed information, eg reports
 - ☞ how people can respond and who to
 - ☞ what sort of information should be included in the submission, eg specific details of concerns, who is impacted and why, any issues regarding the process etc

Items To Consider

- ☞ Has your letter or notice been approved by your Service Unit manager?
- ☞ Have you advised senior management and council that you are seeking submissions?
- ☞ Does your letter or notice need to be approved by senior management, ie is the item contentious?

The Costs

- ☞ Allow for the cost of printing and mailing letters.
- ☞ Allow for the cost of advertising for the media promotion.

How To Seek Information

PUBLIC EXHIBITION

The formal exhibition of a plan or document at key locations for a set period of time.

The Purpose

- ☞ To enable broad community feedback on a proposal, draft plan or issue.

Key Actions

Preparation

- ☞ Prepare the appropriate materials, including concept design, sketches and draft plans.
- ☞ Determine the locations for exhibition.
- ☞ Prepare the display (refer to Information Displays).

Helpful Hints:

- Produce large colour plans to attract attention (eg A1 size to present a building or park redesign).
- Select exhibition locations that are well used and/ or easily accessible by the community, eg libraries, shopping centres, community centres.
- Consider exhibiting designs, sketches and plans at or near the site involved (so that people can relate proposed changes to the site).
- Use plan/ design models where appropriate.

Promotion

- ☞ Advertise the exhibition through local newspapers and other methods, eg letter box drop, newsletters, radio, posters, schools.

Helpful Hints:

- Advertising can be targeted to manage costs. For example, if a proposal relates to a local park, a main focus could be on advising people living within 500m of the park.
- All public exhibitions should include a notice in the local newspaper.

Items To Consider

- ☞ Have you placed all relevant information on exhibition?
- ☞ Have you provided contact details to enable submissions? (signed written submissions should be sought).
- ☞ Have you booked the exhibition space in advance (where necessary).

The Costs

- ☞ Allow for the cost of preparing materials for display.
- ☞ Allow for the cost of draft plans.

How To Seek Information

FOCUS GROUP SESSION

Semi-structured interview with a small group of invited representative participants.

The Purpose

- ☞ To obtain the opinion of a representative group of people on a topic, to assist in planning for a target group or the wider community.

Key Actions

Preparation

- ☞ Determine the number of focus group sessions to hold.
- ☞ Select and invite the participants.
- ☞ Select and book the venue.
- ☞ Send preliminary information to the participants.

Helpful Hints:

- The characteristics of the participants should represent the target group, eg young people who have been unemployed for 6 months, older adults who have been retired for at least 5 years or are over a certain age, or young parents who are not employed with children under 5 years.
- Participants can be identified through community contacts, eg community centres, child care centres, playgroups, libraries, youth centres, or through random contact using resident listings.
- Contact prospective participants by phone and then send a formal letter of invitation.
- The number of people should be eight to ten (8-10) to enable quality involvement by all participants.
- There should be a mix of genders unless the target group is one gender.
- The questions will depend on the topic. However, in general they should be relatively simple and of relevance to the focus group.

Session Approach

- ☞ Prepare questions and the session approach, including the materials required.
- ☞ Hold the focus group session.

Helpful Hints:

- ☞ A more participatory approach could include presenting photographs, sketches or objects to generate thoughts or seek a response.
- ☞ Set the 'ground rules' at the beginning of the session, eg all thoughts/ comments are valid, debate is not appropriate although consensus is not expected etc.
- ☞ Provide refreshments to 'keep people going' and create a more relaxed atmosphere.
- ☞ A focus group session requires the ability to generate open comments and interpret values and ideas. The involvement of a specialist facilitator may be advisable.

Data

- ☞ Determine how the data will be collated and used.

Items To Consider

- ☞ Have you carefully chosen your venue? It should be accessible and also be small, warm and have a pleasant ambience (due to the smaller number of participants and the need for open and honest input).
- ☞ Have you chosen the appropriate time for the group, eg early afternoon for older adults, after school for young people etc? Ask prospective participants what is the best time.
- ☞ Have you provided support where needed, eg child care for young parents, transport for young people?

The Costs

- ☞ Most focus group sessions involve a small payment to the participants (consider 'market rates' at the time). Alternately a service, activity or gift could be offered.
- ☞ Allow for venue and refreshment costs.
- ☞ Allow for other material costs, eg sketches, photos, other 'prompts'.
- ☞ Allow for the cost of an independent facilitator if required.

How To Involve

MEETING WITH USERS/STAKEHOLDERS

Face to face meeting with a selected group, which has a specific interest in an issue, activity, facility, service etc.

The Purpose

- ☞ To inform and/ or obtain feedback on a proposed action, project, strategic direction or policy.
- ☞ To ensure the issues, needs and ideas of a user or stakeholder group are considered.
- ☞ To involve a user or stakeholder group in planning for a facility or service.

Key Actions

Preparation

- ☞ Determine which groups or individuals should be consulted.
- ☞ Determine the appropriate timing and venue.
- ☞ Arrange the meeting (suggest make contact by telephone and then confirm in writing).
- ☞ Prepare for the meeting, eg:
 - ☞ Determine the key points for discussion.
 - ☞ Prepare notes, overheads, maps, photographs, displays etc.
 - ☞ Determine materials required, eg chairs and tables, overhead projectors, kitchen appliances/ utensils, refreshments.

Helpful Hints:

- ☞ User groups could include sporting groups, parents of children, participants of a program. Stakeholder groups could include Chambers of Commerce, community service providers and advocacy groups, other government bodies.
- ☞ 'Near the site' meetings can 'set the scene' for relevant ideas and discussion.
- ☞ Give at least two to three weeks notice for meetings.
- ☞ Clearly set the boundaries regarding the number of people invited from each group.
- ☞ Provide all meeting details in correspondence, ie date, time, venue, purpose of meeting.
- ☞ Follow up personal contact with formal correspondence and details.

Meeting Approach

- ☞ The meeting approach and the level of formality will vary with the group involved and the issue or item being discussed. Some ideas are provided below.

Helpful Hints:

- ☞ The preparation and distribution of an agenda before the meeting will enable people to think about their response and ideas.
- ☞ The context of the meeting should be clearly stated, ie key topics to discuss, why meeting is being held, other groups that will be consulted, desired outputs.
- ☞ Smaller user groups can often be less formal, ie around the table discussion.
- ☞ A more organised approach, with information, maps, sketches and notes for presentation will ensure a more informed discussion (especially for larger groups).
- ☞ For larger groups, record key points made on a white board or butchers paper, so that people can see what has been said.

How To Involve

Feedback

- ☞ Highlight ways in which the meeting participants can be further involved in planning or directions if appropriate.
- ☞ Forward a summary of the meeting notes to the participants.
- ☞ Seek feedback on the meeting approach.

Items To Consider

- ☞ Is your venue accessible and have you considered other special needs?
- ☞ Have you identified all user groups and stakeholders that could be affected by or have a key interest in an action, issue, policy etc?
- ☞ Is it possible or appropriate to combine meetings, ie two or three user groups of the same facility?

The Costs

- ☞ Allow for cost of materials/ displays.
- ☞ Allow for venue and refreshment costs.

How To Involve

EXISTING COMMUNITY GROUP MEETING

Meeting with a community group that would not generally be involved in a planning process (ie they are not a key interest or lobby group). This involves linking to an existing meeting or arranging a special meeting with a community group, eg school committees, school children, parents at playgroup, youth groups, senior citizens, people with disabilities, local craft group, business groups, service groups.

The Purpose

- ☞ To gain an understanding of the needs, issues and ideas of various groups in the community.
- ☞ To obtain input in planning from the broad community and achieve representative consultation.
- ☞ To further create networks and links across the community.

Key Actions

Preparation

- ☞ Make contact with a key representative of the group, eg principal of a school, coordinator of an activity, president of a club etc, to arrange the meeting.
- ☞ Prepare notes, displays, information as appropriate. It may be advisable to send some information in advance to prepare meeting participants.

Helpful Hints:

- Ensure there is some interest in the topic when arranging the meeting.
- Personal contact is best to arrange the meeting. This can be followed up by a formal letter of confirmation, with details.
- It is generally best to meet in the group's normal meeting place, even if holding a special session. People know where to go and feel comfortable.
- Do not overload people with information. Make any presentation interesting and visually appealing.

Meeting Approach (Link to Existing Meeting)

- ☞ If joining an existing meeting, you generally need to be concise and quickly generate interest and discussion.

Helpful Hints:

- Do not join an existing meeting if they are unable to allow you at least 30 minutes (check the availability of time). Try to arrange a separate session if there is an issue with time.
- Endeavour to be placed on the agenda as the only or main speaker for the meeting.
- Give a brief outline of the topic and why seeking people's views, to create interest and awareness. However, spend most of the time listening.
- A more informal approach can often generate greater discussion, eg inviting people to talk about particular needs, issues or values.

Meeting Approach (Arrange Special Session)

- ☞ If holding a special session, such as with school children or parents of schools, develop a more structured approach that aims to increase involvement.

How To Involve

Helpful Hints:

- ☞ Provide information at the beginning of the session to enable informed discussion, including displays and photos where appropriate.
- ☞ Consider using art as a form of expression, eg young children drawing or painting their ideas or values.
- ☞ Consider working in small groups (in a workshop style) to discuss and record ideas.
- ☞ Record discussion points on butchers paper or whiteboard, so that people can see what is said.

Feedback

- ☞ Give contact and project process details to enable further involvement if desired.
- ☞ Forward any summaries or relevant outcomes of the meeting to the group contact person for distribution.
- ☞ Encourage any general feedback on the approach or project process.

Items To Consider

- ☞ Would the group reflect the characteristics and views of others in the community?

The Costs

- ☞ Allow for the cost of any materials, eg plans, maps etc.

How To Involve

WORKSHOP SESSION

Structured approach to involving meeting participants in working through an issue and/ or developing solutions.

The Purpose

- ☞ To generate discussion and broader thinking regarding an issue or topic.
- ☞ To genuinely involve people in identifying and solving issues.

Key Actions

Preparation

- ☞ Determine the general size, focus and desired outcome of the workshop. Consider whether you wish to use the workshop to involve the wider community or to obtain the ideas and input of a particular group.
- ☞ Determine the venue, time, length of session.
- ☞ Promote the workshop.
- ☞ Prepare notes, displays and other material.

Helpful Hints:

- A workshop can involve a small number of people (say 10-12) or a larger number (30-40). Much larger than 40 could become unmanageable.
- The involvement of specific groups will require a more targeted approach to promotion, eg invitation by letter to stakeholders, residents in an area, representative bodies, users of a service etc.
- In promotions, inform people of the workshop approach and include some questions to generate pre-workshop thinking.

Workshop Approach

- ☞ Set up the room to be conducive to small or larger group discussion.
- ☞ Provide relevant material at each table, eg maps, plans, summary reports, workshop guidelines.
- ☞ Set up displays and white boards, overheads and/ or butchers paper for recording group comments.
- ☞ Facilitate/ guide the discussions with specific questions or topics.
- ☞ Arrange a scribe and facilitator within each small group.

Helpful Hints:

- ☞ The use of small tables with four to five chairs at each, all with a view of the front of the room can work well.
- ☞ Allow time for group members to introduce themselves and feel comfortable before commencing 'heavy discussion'.
- ☞ Switch from large to small group discussions to make the session more interesting, eg the whole group talking about general needs or issues and small groups working on solutions.
- ☞ Rather than each group presenting their findings (which takes considerable time) consider placing points (written on butchers paper by small groups) on a wall for viewing during a break. The whole group can then return to discuss the points made.
- ☞ Be flexible in the approach (recognising when people are ready to move on or need more time or whether an approach should be completely changed).
- ☞ At least one facilitator should be free to move around the room to talk to individual groups and deter any conflicts.

How To Involve

Feedback

- ☞ Give participants the opportunity to be further involved in planning through further meetings or comment on an output.
- ☞ Seek feedback on the workshop approach through a feedback form or informally.
- ☞ Forward a summary of the workshop findings.

Helpful Hints:

- ☞ Ask participants to record their name and address on a participants sheet on arrival.

Protocols

- ☞ Elected members should be made aware of all meetings and workshops that involve the broad community or relate to a project of ward or council significance. Advice is to be via a memo to all Councillors and the Executive Team.
- ☞ Councillor diaries should be checked when arranging a relevant meeting/ workshop. Meetings and workshops should not clash with Council meetings or key Council events.
- ☞ A summary of meeting notes should be sent to participants and Councillors within 7 days (received within 10 days of the meeting), to maintain the interest and to show a professional approach.

Items To Consider

- ☞ Is your venue accessible and comfortable (including a central or easily accessible location)?
- ☞ Have you provided for refreshments to 'keep people going' and to recognise the value of their input?
- ☞ Do you need to obtain a skilled independent facilitator, particularly if there will be large numbers (ie do you have the skills and confidence)?
- ☞ Have you sought advice from other Council staff that are skilled in holding workshops?

The Costs

- ☞ Allow for the venue and refreshment costs.
- ☞ Allow for facilitator costs if required.
- ☞ Allow for promotion (mailing and advertising) costs.

How To Involve

PUBLIC ART SESSION

The integration of public art into the consultation process, ie using public art as a tool to encourage people to express their ideas, views and values.

The Purpose

- ☞ To make a consultation process more interesting and creative.
- ☞ To enable the expression of people's values and ideas that may otherwise be difficult to verbalise.

Key Actions

Preparation

- ☞ Determine the participants/ target group.
- ☞ Determine the medium to use, eg painting, drawing, mosaic, patchwork. Consider the characteristics and interest of the target group in doing so.
- ☞ Obtain materials, eg paints, canvass, tools.
- ☞ Obtain facilitator/ artist if required.
- ☞ Promote the activity to the target group.

Helpful Hints:

- ☞ Consider linking to existing groups such as a youth group, senior citizens group or children in a school, so that people are comfortable to discuss ideas and values with each other.
- ☞ Talk to potential participants (in advance) about the art medium to use and the desired products.
- ☞ An artist can be used to encourage creativity and guide skills (not to determine the product or ideas).

Activity Approach

- ☞ Hold the activity at a venue that is conducive to art creation, eg art workshop, outdoors.
- ☞ Set a broad framework for the presentation of ideas, eg how to incorporate ideas within art works.

Helpful Hints:

- ☞ The approach should be informal to encourage creativity.
- ☞ There should be an opportunity for people to explain their ideas and values and how they have depicted these within the art work.
- ☞ Provide refreshments to 'keep people going'.

Feedback

- ☞ Give people the opportunity to be further involved and comment on final proposals if desired.
- ☞ Use a public place to present the art work, and seek general community feedback on its meaning.

Items To Consider

- ☞ Are people aware of the activity that they will participate in, so that they can dress accordingly?
- ☞ Is the venue suitable for the activity?
- ☞ Is the time commitment required by the participants reasonable and/ or agreed to?
- ☞ Have you checked that people are happy to donate their art work for display (possibly permanent display)?

The Costs

- ☞ Allow for the cost of materials.
- ☞ Allow for the venue and refreshment costs.
- ☞ Allow for the cost of a facilitator/ artist if required.

How To Involve

COMMUNITY FORUM

The use of speakers to provide information and facilitate informed discussion on a topic.

The Purpose

- ☞ To generate interest regarding a topic and enable community participation in discussion.

Key Actions

Preparation

- ☞ Define the topic of the forum.
- ☞ Arrange speakers with experience or expertise on topical items. Contact potential speakers by telephone and then confirm arrangements in writing. Include all relevant details in the written correspondence, including the purpose of the forum, the speaker's role, the time allowed for the presentation etc.
- ☞ Develop a framework for questions and discussion, in consultation with the speakers.
- ☞ Arrange the venue and materials, eg displays.
- ☞ Promote the forum.

Helpful Hints:

- ☞ Ensure speakers are entertaining and able to present informally, ie without reading notes.
- ☞ Involve well known speakers (household names) if possible.
- ☞ Targeted promotion to interest groups (eg personal invitation), in addition to broad promotion, should result in greater participation.

Forum Approach

- ☞ Determine the best approach, taking into consideration the type of speakers, the venue and the target audience.

Helpful Hints:

- ☞ A panel of speakers can work well, presenting different aspects of a topic and providing a focus for questions and further discussion.
- ☞ There should be opportunities for formal and informal discussion between the participants as well as with the speakers.
- ☞ Include refreshments and breaks to enable informal discussion.

Feedback

- ☞ Obtain feedback on the forum through a feedback form or informally.

Items To Consider

- ☞ Is the venue accessible, particularly for people with disabilities?
- ☞ Is the topic relevant to the community and can it generate further interest or action?

The Costs

- ☞ Most speakers will not request a fee, although there may be travel or accommodation costs that should be compensated.
- ☞ Allow for the cost of the venue and refreshments.

How To Involve

COMMUNITY DEBATE

Organised speakers and debating panels, used to discuss an issue.

The Purpose

- ☞ To enable debate and encourage consideration of all points of view.

Key Actions

Preparation

- ☞ Arrange debate teams or speakers.
- ☞ In consultation with the debate teams/ speakers determine the topic.
- ☞ Arrange venue and timing.
- ☞ Promote the debate.

Helpful Hints:

- ☞ Schools could be involved as part of an education and development activity. This would also encourage parents to attend.
- ☞ Ensure the item is topical and relevant.

Debate Approach

- ☞ Set up the venue to encourage amicable debate, eg teams seated near each other.
- ☞ Outline the debate process and rules at the commencement.
- ☞ Include question and discussion times to enable audience participation.

Helpful Hints:

- ☞ A pre debate meeting involving the debate teams would be advisable to dispel any animosity.
- ☞ A strong debate facilitator will be required.
- ☞ The 'friendly nature' of the debate should be stated.
- ☞ Provide refreshments to encourage informal discussion.

Items To Consider

- ☞ Does the debate contribute to exploring or addressing issues that exist within the community? (it should be of value)
- ☞ Is the venue appropriate, eg accessible and supportive of active discussion?

The Costs

- ☞ Allow for venue and refreshment costs.

How To Involve

SITE/TOUR MEETING

Semi-structured meeting with the broad community or key groups at the place of issue.

The Purpose

- ☞ To enable informed discussion of needs or proposals relating to the site.

Key Actions

Preparation

- ☞ Prepare a meeting outline and determine the desired outcomes.
- ☞ Determine time and meeting place.
- ☞ Promote the meeting to interested parties, including the broad community if appropriate.
- ☞ Prepare display material and other information.

Helpful Hints:

- Saturday afternoon after junior sport often works well when people are not working and families participate as an 'outing'. Alternatively, consider an early evening gathering during the daylight saving period.

Meeting Approach

- ☞ Present the proposal and/ or issues at the commencement of the meeting (particularly for larger community group gatherings).
- ☞ Include a display for a community group gathering (use as a framework for the presentation).
- ☞ Facilitate discussion and the recording of ideas and comments.

Helpful Hints:

- ☞ A small user or interest group meeting can be more informal, although should have a broad agenda to guide discussions.
- ☞ A larger community group gathering requires more structure and could include a walk around the site and opportunities for discussion and questions at various places on the site.
- ☞ Some refreshments after the meeting/ walk around the site are generally appreciated and provide an opportunity for community interaction (eg sausage sizzle).

Feedback

- ☞ Provide participants with the opportunity to be further involved in planning through further meetings or comment on outputs.
- ☞ Forward a summary of the meeting findings.

Items To Consider

- ☞ Is the site accessible for people with a disability, older adults, young parents with prams etc?
- ☞ Do you have an alternative meeting space in case of wet weather?

The Costs

- ☞ Allow for refreshments for community gatherings.
- ☞ Allow for display and information costs.
- ☞ Allow for the cost of promotion, eg advertisement/ letter box drop.

How To Involve

PUBLIC MEETING

Formal gathering of the general public regarding an issue or matter, generally involving larger numbers of people.

The Purpose

- ☞ To inform the general public of a proposal, action or issue and/ or enable comment.

Key Actions

Preparation

- ☞ Determine the venue and timing.
- ☞ Prepare materials, including displays, meeting agenda, summary information etc.
- ☞ Promote the meeting.

Helpful Hints:

- ☞ An evening meeting (say after 7pm) allows people who work to attend. Monday and Friday nights are generally less appropriate.
- ☞ A weekend meeting is less likely to be attended, unless it is a site meeting and less formal.
- ☞ A public meeting can generate greater discussion if people have the opportunity to look at maps, plans, information etc before the meeting starts.
- ☞ Include notices in local newspapers, and also consider other methods, eg school newsletters, posters in community centres, libraries and shopping centres, radio announcements.

Meeting Approach

- ☞ Set up the room to create a more relaxed environment, eg chairs angled rather than a straight line, presentation of display boards around the room.
- ☞ Invite participants to introduce themselves and indicate their interest in the meeting/ project/ issue (providing the number of participants is not too large). This gives the facilitator an understanding of personal agendas.
- ☞ Give a clear outline of the meeting approach and the time that will be allocated to various items.
- ☞ Give a 'background' presentation on the issue or proposal to inform people prior to discussion.
- ☞ Facilitate the discussion, endeavouring to ensure that individuals do not dominate.

Helpful Hints:

- ☞ Be firm but polite with participants that are agitated or dominating. Allow the person to raise their concerns but guide the discussion to enable comments from others.
- ☞ If individuals are dominating the discussion, consider breaking into small groups to enable more focussed discussion and then ask each group to outline their main concerns or ideas.
- ☞ Encourage consideration of ideas and solutions rather than focussing on negative issues, ie very quickly identify the issues and then move on.
- ☞ Try not to take agitated criticism personally.
- ☞ Consider using an independent facilitator, particularly if Council could be seen to have a vested interest in an outcome.

Feedback

- ☞ Obtain contact details so that a summary of the meeting can be forwarded to each participant.
- ☞ Highlight how the participants can be further involved and if necessary invite formal submissions.

How To Involve In

Protocols

- ☞ Elected members should be made aware of all meetings and workshops that involve the broad community or relate to a project of ward or council significance. Advice is to be via a memo to all Councillors and the Executive Team.
- ☞ Councillor diaries should be checked when arranging a relevant meeting/ workshop. Meetings and workshops should not clash with Council meetings or key Council events.
- ☞ A summary of meeting notes should be sent to participants and Councillors within 7 days (received within 10 days of the meeting), to maintain the interest and to show a professional approach.

Items To Consider

- ☞ Is the chosen venue physically accessible and well located?
- ☞ Have you provided sufficient refreshments (especially near dinner time)?
- ☞ Is a public meeting the best approach, ie would a workshop approach be better to enable informed discussion?

The Costs

- ☞ Allow for venue and refreshment costs.
- ☞ Allow for facilitator costs if required, although any facilitator should have a clear understanding of the issue (and a level of staff involvement will be required regardless).
- ☞ Allow for material preparation costs, eg displays, information.

HOW TO ES

How To Establish Partnerships

ADVISORY COMMITTEE

A committee established by Council to advise on specific issues, projects and policy. This could be a formal Committee of Council or a less formal operational advisory committee.

The Purpose

- ☞ To involve community representatives in:
 - ☞ providing ongoing advice on complex or significant issues/ matters
 - ☞ guiding Council policy and decision making

Examples include the Animal Advisory Committee and the Surf Clubs Liaison Committee.

Key Actions

Committee Initiation

- ☞ Determine the role of the Committee.
- ☞ Develop Terms of Reference for the Committee.
- ☞ Determine the membership selection process and criteria.
- ☞ Prepare a report to Council for approval of the Committee establishment, its role and the Terms of Reference.
- ☞ Advertise for Expressions of Interest for the committee where appropriate.

Helpful Hints:

- Expressions of Interest need to be called for community representatives on a Committee of Council.
- Selection for an operational advisory group/ committee is generally less formal, with representatives being targeted by Council.

Committee Operation

- ☞ Meet in accordance with terms of reference or agreed arrangement.
- ☞ Determine responsibilities and outcomes.
- ☞ Establish sub committees to undertake specific projects and tasks accordingly.
- ☞ Report on outcomes and recommendations.

Helpful Hints:

- A Committee of Council will need to be chaired by a Councillor.

Protocols

- ☞ Proposals for formal Committees of Management must be reported to Council for endorsement.
- ☞ Council should be advised of other less formal committees established.

Items To Consider

- ☞ Is the committee representative for the issue, project or task (ie, does it include appropriate stakeholders and community representatives)?
- ☞ Has the life of the committee been determined and stated?

The Costs

- ☞ Allow for meeting costs, eg venue, refreshment, materials.

How To ES

How To Establish Partnerships

TASKFORCE OR WORKING PARTY

A group of people selected to work with Council to complete a project/ task.

The Purpose

- ☞ To involve the community and other stakeholders in planning for and/ or achieving a project or activity within a timeframe.
- ☞ To achieve project objectives and desired outcomes through the formalised input of community members and other staff.

Key Actions

Group Initiation

- ☞ Determine the role and terms of reference of the group.
- ☞ Determine the timeframe and clear outcomes.
- ☞ Determine the membership of the group and invite participants accordingly.

Helpful Hints:

- ☞ Target people who have a proven interest in the project, issue, task.
- ☞ Contain the group to 10-12 people, involving community and Council representatives.

Operation of the Group

- ☞ Select a chairperson and nominate specific roles and tasks.
- ☞ Agree on the timeframes (meetings and term of the group).
- ☞ Set clear objectives and milestones.

Items To Consider

- ☞ Has the establishment of the group been authorised by senior management?
- ☞ If the involvement of other staff is required, has approval been obtained from their Team Leader?

The Costs

- ☞ Allow for meeting costs, eg venue, refreshment and materials.

How To ES

How To Establish Partnerships

JOINT VENTURE

A formal arrangement with community members, stakeholders or organisations to plan for and implement a project or service.

The Purpose

- ☞ To achieve initiatives in partnership with the community or other stakeholders, eg bushland regeneration program.
- ☞ To involve the community in decision making and strategic directions through projects.
- ☞ To formalise a financial or resource contribution from the community or other stakeholder, eg SHOROC committees.

Key Actions

Develop the Venture

- ☞ Identify opportunities for joint ventures based on needs and issues to be addressed.
- ☞ Determine the benefits to Council and the community.
- ☞ In consultation with potential 'partners' define the specific project and roles.
- ☞ Determine the formal arrangements, eg timeframes and agreed arrangements, recognition of contributions.

Venture Operations

- ☞ Establish and formalise the framework for the venture (who will do or contribute what and when).
- ☞ Develop formal communication processes.
- ☞ Provide administrative support for projects and programs.

Protocols

- ☞ Any proposal for a joint venture (financial or otherwise) must be reported to Council for endorsement before proceeding.

Items To Consider

- ☞ Does the joint venture have Council's support?
- ☞ Does the joint venture benefit the broad community?
- ☞ Is the joint venture of financial or resource value to Council?

The Costs

- ☞ Allow for administration and material costs.
- ☞ Allow for program resource costs.

Good Practice Examples

The following good practice examples relate to Warringah Council projects that have been undertaken in recent years. They are provided to give practical advice on how to implement different consultation types, including details of the specific tasks that are undertaken.

The good practice examples highlight the capacity of Council staff to successfully coordinate community consultations. They also highlight the potential to achieve greater involvement of the community by adopting more innovative approaches and undertaking different methods of consultation to achieve the required outcome.

Additional good practice examples will be added over time, and staff are encouraged to submit examples to assist other staff in achieving more innovative consultation approaches.

Good Practice Examples

YOUTH ENVIRONMENT FORUM

CONSULTATION TYPE/S

Community Forum (Involving)

PURPOSE OF THE CONSULTATION

- ☞ To inform young people and their schools and groups of Council's environmental strategy and invite the public to contribute their ideas.
- ☞ To obtain information and document the concerns and ideas of young people about the environment, for inclusion in the strategy.
- ☞ To create ongoing relationships with groups Council has not worked with before on environmental projects e.g. churches and youth groups. The aim being to work together on future projects that require partnerships and community advocacy.
- ☞ To show a commitment to hearing and where possible acting upon the concerns of Warringah's youth in relation to the local environment.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

The Youth Environment Forum was held to consult with the young people of Warringah about their hopes, visions and concerns for our natural environment. It was designed to be a youth-specific stage of the general community consultation carried out in the development of Council's Draft Environmental Strategy. Many of the issues, concerns and strategies raised through the forum will be reflected in the final strategy.

Other objectives of the forum were to:

- ☞ Raise awareness amongst staff and the community of the commitment of our local young people to the environment.
- ☞ Provide an educative forum for young people.
- ☞ Provide opportunities for the young people involved to develop new skills in expressing themselves.
- ☞ De-mystify Council as an organisation, enable young people to have confidence in taking part in Council decision making processes, and to feel welcome and comfortable within the physical space of the Council chambers.

CONSULTATION APPROACH

What did we invite people to do?

- ☞ There were three main ways that young people could get involved in the forum:
 - ☞ By attending on the day and participating in hands on workshops and performances.
 - ☞ By training before the forum to be facilitators on the day.
 - ☞ By creating large canvass banners that depict their environmental concerns and hopes (we provided the materials) that would be hung in the chambers on the day.

How did we promote it?

- ☞ We made an effort to promote the program to a wide range of different groups, using networks that already existed in the Youth services team at Council, the environmental team and others within Council who have contact with Warringah's youth. We also used the networks that exist within the community (eg schools, community and cultural and environmental groups).

Good Practice Examples

Specifically we used:

- ☞ Direct mail and e-mail to target groups like schools, young public speaking group, scouts, guides. This list was compiled using the Community Directory.
- ☞ Posters or fliers in shops, community centres, surf clubs and the aquatic centre. The posters were designed to look more like a poster for a youth 'event' than a boring ad for a public meeting. The art work was done by a graffiti artist working with the Youth services team and this was then designed into a poster and invitation by Council's graphic designer.
- ☞ A display at the launch of the new Youth Advisory Group (YAG).
- ☞ Speaking at the very first meeting of the new Youth Advisory Group and inviting the young people and groups to participate. Information was sent out in the minutes to all members.
- ☞ Information in the Mayor's Message.
- ☞ Editorial content in the Northern Beaches Weekender, Manly Daily and Local Government Focus.
- ☞ Article in October WEEN (enviro education newsletter).
- ☞ Brochures distributed through the Manly Youth Council.
- ☞ Fliers distributed by vacation care coordinators to over 400 vacation care participants.
- ☞ Information on Council's Website linked to the youth pages, with contact details.

The logistics:

- ☞ The day was fully catered by external caterers and ourselves, due to other commitments of the internal caterers, although the afternoon tea for the parents, teachers and dignitaries was catered for by Council's caterers.
- ☞ We used the Pirelli Area, Council Chambers and associated meeting rooms for the forum.

Use of Consultants:

- ☞ We employed OzGREEN to carry out specific aspects of the project (eg training the youth facilitators), based on their expertise in areas such as running 'River Congresses' for schools, visioning workshops etc.

SUCCESS OF THE CONSULTATION

- ☞ Many groups sent representatives and many individuals also came. Some of the groups represented were local schools, religious and cultural organisations, surf clubs and the Youth Advisory Group. We learnt that it was very worthwhile contacting non-traditional target groups to encourage them to become involved in this process.
- ☞ Banners were obtained from 10 different organisations.
- ☞ Over 15 young people (aged from 8 –20) trained as facilitators prior to the forum.
- ☞ Over 85 young people came on the day.
- ☞ Media coverage in the Northern Beaches Weekender, Manly Daily, Local Government Focus, WEEN, Radio Northern Beaches.
- ☞ Over 100 suggestions for environmental actions came from the forum.
- ☞ Many young people left the forum asking when the next one would be. Requests were made for the forum to be held every year in future.
- ☞ We worked with groups who were very skeptical about their input being valued and listened to because their ideas were controversial. We managed to encourage them to attend and become involved, assuring them that their input was considered important and would be listened to. We felt an important part of the process was to include all sectors and aspects of the community not just to favour the easy areas.

Good Practice Examples

SPECIAL INNOVATIONS

Our commitment was to set an example of good ecological practice and to reducing waste on the day of the forum. This included the following:

Promotion of Recycling Good Practices

- ☞ Providing recycling facilities for paper, containers and food scraps. These were then taken to Kimbriki where the compost was used at the Eco garden.
- ☞ Use of linen tablecloths and napkins instead of disposable paper ones (environmental education has purchased a set especially for functions, contact a member of the environmental education team to find out what is required to borrow these for your next event.)
- ☞ Use of china mugs and plates rather than disposables. Every one of the young people attending the forum was given a mug, calico bag, and recycled cardboard pen at the end of the day to encourage them to continue good ecological practices.
- ☞ Instead of 'virgin paper' for brainstorming, we used scrap paper from a local printers, that had been printed on one side.
- ☞ Props for use during the forum were purchased from Reverse Garbage at Marrickville and then passed on to the youth team at the end of the forum.

Emphasis on Fun

- ☞ To make the event fun, we organised spray artists to depict the day's discussions through a large colourful banner. It was great watching Primary School students having lessons in their lunch break from the artists, spraying parrots and possums together.
- ☞ The afternoon was spent with props and lots of noise (!) making presentations to share their messages with parents, teachers and other guests. Music would have been a great addition too (maybe next time!).
- ☞ Meal breaks were held outside for a change of atmosphere and a chance to run around.

Use of Public Art

- ☞ Visual representation of issues was expressed by participants at the forum through interactive graffiti art.
- ☞ Youth of the community were asked to express visually their concerns, issues they wanted addressed, and possible solutions through the painting of banners prior to the forum.
- ☞ Expressing issues visually and interactively allowed people who are uncomfortable with words and text, or do not feel that they are articulate to still be involved in the process and valued in the overall outcome.

Other Unique Methods

- ☞ Use of images from the forum during the presentations that night (using a digital camera and Power Point a looped presentation was produced during the days proceedings).
- ☞ Challenging young people to communicate their ideas and strategies to an audience of Councillors, staff, teachers, and other members of the community.

Recognition

- ☞ We gave certificates of thanks to each participant, as well as a calico bag at the end of the day full of environmental resources, postcards & stickers. It is very important to recognise the time that people contribute to a day like the forum, and the skills that young people have developed by being involved.

Good Practice Examples

Follow Up

- ☞ We have sent out a kit of photos from the day and the facilitators training prior to the forum, and information for each group that was involved, to use for their records.
- ☞ We are offering a 'guest speaker' program. In this, a staff member would visit any interested groups, to go through the strategy, and point out where the young people's suggestions have been included in the document.
- ☞ Follow up communication was also used to inform participants and key groups of what stage the development of the strategy is up to, and key dates in the strategy process that are still to come.

POTENTIAL FOR IMPROVEMENT

- ☞ Seating – with young people it may have been better not to have participants sit around a large table (in some cases this was a bit daunting). We had some groups go outside or sit on the floor. In future we might encourage all groups to find their own space where they are comfortable, giving suggestions of areas available.
- ☞ The size of our average workshop group was 15. It is suggested that it would have worked better to have smaller groups with similar ages in them.
- ☞ One participant felt that although the facilitators were volunteers and had attended a training program for the day, they really did not know much about the environmental problems of Warringah or possible solutions. It is suggested that future facilitators have environmental knowledge.
- ☞ Next time we would consider having a clean up committee for such a large forum, with each group being responsible for cleaning up their own area for the day.
- ☞ Better housekeeping information could have been given at the beginning of the day and throughout the forum by the organisers.
- ☞ Presenting each participant with their mug at registration rather than at the end of the day, thereby making them responsible for it for the day. This would require making facilities available for washing them. Name tags could even be put on the mugs so they can then take the mugs home at the end of the day.
- ☞ We catered for 50% vegetarian. We could be bold in the future and allocate 60 - 70% vegetarian as it was very well received.
- ☞ We could have provided participants with a summary list of issues and strategies from the day, to take home with them. These lists could also have been provided for the 'adults' who joined the forum in the evening. This would have made it clearer that their comments had been compiled and were being recorded and considered by Council.
- ☞ We forgot to honour and thank the dignitaries for attending at the end of the day. This was because we wanted the whole forum to be owned by and run by the youth there and we forgot to brief them on the correct protocols for the occasion.

CONTACT DETAILS

Jade Herriman – Environmental Education Team ext: 2370

Good Practice Examples

AFFORDABLE HOUSING FORUM

CONSULTATION TYPE/S

Community Forum (Involving)

PURPOSE OF THE CONSULTATION

The Purpose

- ☞ To publicly raise the issue of affordable housing as one requiring action at the local level.
- ☞ To create an opportunity for the public, agencies and politicians (including Councillors) to hear a broad overview of the issue, and specific examples of what other councils are doing to create more affordable housing.
- ☞ To seek support for a regional approach to the issue, coordinated by the three Northern Beaches councils.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

The Affordable Housing Forum held in the Council Chambers on 30 August, 2000.

The forum was organised at the request of the Northern Beaches Interagency Association, a network of some 40 community services agencies from the area. Affordable housing has become an issue for the Interagency mainly through direct contact with clients facing personal and financial hardship due to high housing costs in the area.

It is also becoming an issue for councils because of new state legislation seeking to encourage more local government involvement in the development of new, more affordable models of housing tailored to local needs.

CONSULTATION APPROACH

- ☞ The forum was chaired by former Councillor, Mr Tom Webster and attended by 60-70 people including the Mayor and several Councillors, representatives from Manly and Pittwater councils and community agencies, and members of the public. Guest speakers included representatives from the NSW Institute of Architects, Local Government and Shires Association, Department of Urban Affairs and Planning and Willoughby Council.
- ☞ Council's role was mainly to host the event as well as to lend support with the logistics of organising the event.
- ☞ Because this was an issue being raised by the community it was important that the group requesting the forum took the major responsibility for the event's organisation and running. Council staff played a support and advice role only.

Council assisted by

- ☞ Providing the venue (with the Mayor's permission)
- ☞ Providing equipment (projectors, microphones etc)
- ☞ The Mayor agreeing to attend and to officially open the forum
- ☞ Assisting with organisation (eg invitation mail-outs, printing, catering etc)
- ☞ Promoting the forum via the Mayor's Message etc.

Good Practice Examples

SPECIAL INNOVATIONS

- ☞ The fact that Council acted as ‘host’ rather than as ‘promoter / organiser’ had implications in terms of the organisation and running of the event. Councillors and staff were able to be more objective about the issue because it was not Council promoting it as such.
- ☞ It was important to choose an objective chair with credibility on ‘both sides’ of the debate.
- ☞ Careful attention was paid to ensuring that a representative cross-section of community members, agencies, politicians and experts in the field were represented at the forum.
- ☞ Specific resolutions came from the meeting to ensure coordinated follow-up action. Such meetings can easily leave the issue ‘hanging in the air’ without specific action being agreed for follow-up. As such it is advisable to ensure the audience is aware at the beginning of how decisions or recommendations will be made and how follow-up action will be managed.

SUCCESS OF THE CONSULTATION

- ☞ The consultation was successful because it resulted in specific follow-up action that involved all key stakeholders including the three local councils. A regional steering committee was formed and this committee is now formulating specific recommendations for the local councils.
- ☞ The key recommendations of the forum were also reflected in Council's Social Plan and Environment Strategy.

POTENTIAL FOR IMPROVEMENT

- ☞ Give clearer guidelines to the audience at the start of the meeting as to how decision making and follow-up action will be managed.
- ☞ More publicity.

CONTACT DETAILS

Paul Hogan – Policy, Planning and Commissioning Unit ext: 2731

Good Practice Examples

DRINK DRIVE EDUCATION PROGRAM 'DON'T LET YOUR BEST FRIEND GET SMASHED'.

CONSULTATION TYPE/S

Focus Groups (Seeking Information)

PURPOSE OF THE CONSULTATION

The Purpose

- ☞ To obtain information from young people on the messages, visual images and merchandise that would be appropriate for anti drink drive messages.

CONSULTATION APPROACH

- ☞ Employed Social Change Media to organise six focus groups on the Northern Beaches with young people. The requirement was for a 7:3 ratio of males to females in the 17-25 year age group (recognising that more males are represented in drink drive crashes according to local statistics).
- ☞ Participants were paid \$20 for 1½ hours of their time. The sessions were held from 7pm - 8.30pm.
- ☞ The focus groups were held at local hotels. A number of hotels were keen to assist with drink driving education.
- ☞ A report of the findings was compiled.
- ☞ All participants in the focus groups were invited to the program launch.

SPECIAL INNOVATIONS

- ☞
- ☞ Payment to the participants for attendance.
- ☞ Direct input by the participants into the design of promotion material, eg T shirts, posters, stickers, coasters.
- ☞ Holding the focus group sessions at the core of the problem, ie venues that sell a high rate of alcohol to young people.

SUCCESS OF THE CONSULTATION

- ☞ Excellent feedback and follow up through market research 2 years later showed a high recall rate of the message within the target group.
- ☞ Young people indicated at the focus groups that they were most appreciative of being involved in the project concept and development.

POTENTIAL FOR IMPROVEMENT

- ☞ Run more focus group sessions like this for project development, but find alternative methods of payment.

CONTACT DETAILS

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Good Prac Good Practice Examples

GRIFFITH PARK PLAN OF MANAGEMENT

CONSULTATION TYPE/S

The Purpose

- ☞ Public Meeting (involving)
- ☞ Discussion Paper, for comment (seeking information)
- ☞ Workshop (involving)

PURPOSE OF THE CONSULTATION

To develop a framework for the future management of the park, taking into consideration community values and issues.

CONSULTATION APPROACH

PUBLIC MEETING / COMMUNITY ISSUES DISCUSSION PAPER

Promotion/ Target groups

- ☞ Advertised in Manly Daily.
- ☞ Notice of meeting letter box dropped to all residents in immediate vicinity.
- ☞ Individual letters with notice sent to all interest groups, sporting groups and user groups of the area.

Agenda consisted of:

- ☞ Introduction.
- ☞ Completion of individual sheets outlining values and issues.
- ☞ Report back to meeting.
- ☞ Consolidation of all issues, with a summary to complete session.

Feedback

- ☞ Minutes sent to all attendees reiterating consultation process.
- ☞ Community Issues Discussion Paper sent to all participants and interest groups, including all issues raised at the meeting.
- ☞ Notification sent when the draft Plan of Management was being presented to Council for exhibition and for adoption.

WORKSHOPS

Target Groups

- ☞ Representatives of key interest groups, and resident representatives, were chosen and invited to attend the workshop to discuss and debate key issues. This involved around table discussion with parties with different interests and views.

Good Practice Examples

SPECIAL INNOVATIONS

- ☞ Adding the extra step (workshop) to the consultation process than previously used gave all parties an opportunity to debate and discuss other viewpoints and to assist Council in reaching solutions to issues where conflict existed.

SUCCESS OF CONSULTATION

- ☞ The approach of a workshop as well as meeting and discussion paper feedback worked well, as there were two very distinct opinions on the future of the park. The public meeting and Discussion Paper highlighted this and the workshop got the two parties together to discuss each other's views. This resulted in an understanding of each viewpoint and a compromise was met.

POTENTIAL FOR IMPROVEMENT

- ☞ There was a point where one group of community members lost faith in the process and assumed that Council had already made a decision on a proposal put forward by an interest group without discussing it with the rest of the community. This could have been avoided by a quicker feedback time following the public meeting and an assurance that all proposals would be open for discussion and debate at community workshops. We decided to run the workshop only after the meeting and discussion paper and it should have been in the process from the start and communicated clearly to the community.

CONTACT DETAILS

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Good Practice Examples

1999 BIENNIAL CUSTOMER SATISFACTION RESEARCH PROGRAM

CONSULTATION TYPE/S

Community Survey (seeking information)

PURPOSE OF THE CONSULTATION

- ☞ To involve the community and obtaining information that is representative of the thinking of the whole community

CONSULTATION APPROACH

- ☞ Workshop with Councillors and staff to identify core issues for inclusion in survey.
- ☞ Develop survey questionnaire, pilot survey and refine.
- ☞ Data collection – random selection of 300 households in each of the three wards (total sample 900).
- ☞ Write to household explaining the upcoming survey and asking for cooperation. Also information in Mayor's Message.
- ☞ **Target individuals in household 16 years or older who had most recent birthday (to enhance randomness).**
- ☞ Analysis of data and identification of four "hot" topics.
- ☞ Focus groups (attendees are people participated in the telephone survey) to obtain more information and clarify the hot topics.
- ☞ Report to Council.
- ☞ Write to each household that participated thanking them and forwarding a brochure outlining the results.
- ☞ Distribute "results brochure" through libraries and community centres.
- ☞ Media release detailing main points of survey results.

SPECIAL INNOVATIONS

- ☞ Sending the brochure to participants after the event advising them of the results.

SUCCESS OF CONSULTATION

- ☞ Writing to the households before phoning resulted in a high participation rate.
- ☞ Producing a 4 page brochure outlining the main issues and results. This is much more appealing to read than the 100 page formal report.

POTENTIAL FOR IMPROVEMENT

- ☞ Timing of the survey was poor. Data collection in late November and early December does not engender the interest it may do in middle of the year.

CONTACT DETAILS

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Good Practice Examples

WARRINGAH AQUATIC CENTRE TELEPHONE AWARENESS SURVEY

CONSULTATION TYPE/S

Community Survey (Seeking Information)

PURPOSE OF THE CONSULTATION

- ☞ To determine the awareness of the Warringah Aquatic Centre to evaluate performance (link to performance indicators) and marketing strategy.

CONSULTATION APPROACH

- ☞ Random telephone to obtain 250 responses.
- ☞ Telephone contact undertaken from the Warringah Aquatic Centre in early evening and afternoon.

SUCCESS OF THE CONSULTATION

- ☞ Gave an understanding that a large proportion of people were aware of the facility (82%) and a significant number used the facility (40%).
- ☞ Highlights aspects of the centre that are not well known and the potential for improved marketing.

POTENTIAL FOR IMPROVEMENT

- ☞ Could have offered a complimentary pass to turn a survey into a potential customer.
- ☞ Could have undertaken a larger sample to be more representative (if resources had been available).
- ☞ Could have asked a range of other questions about activity trends and needs to assist in program development.
- ☞ Need to consider the response rate ie the number of calls that were undertaken vs the response, the catchment, ie how far people live from the centre, and the characteristics of respondents to improve the usefulness of the results.

CONTACT DETAILS

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