



STATE  
PLANNING  
COMMISSION



# COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT CHAPTER

April 2018



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Government  
of South Australia  
Department of Planning,  
Transport and Infrastructure

Community Engagement Charter  
State Planning Commission  
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**Government of South Australia**  
Department of Planning,  
Transport and Infrastructure

## Message from the State Planning Commission

The new *Planning, Development and Infrastructure Act 2016* was designed to improve the way we plan in South Australia.

The Act establishes the Community Engagement Charter, an initiative to change the way we consult our communities. In the past, our system for notifying affected communities about establishing or changing planning policy has been too rigid and restricted and has not always reached the people affected. Advancements in technology provide new and innovative opportunities to engage with communities in a more interactive way. New ways of gathering and using data, such as 3D modelling and visualisation, can enhance the way we perceive challenges and provide a better platform to work with communities on the future they want.

The Charter defines a more flexible, effective and meaningful framework for engagement that will:

- foster better planning outcomes that take account of the views and aspirations of communities
- establish trust in the planning process, and
- improve the understanding by communities of the planning system.

The State Planning Commission wants to see a vast improvement in the engagement process. This means finding new and innovative ways to engage with communities and other interest groups as the new planning system is rolled-out.

The Commission will also be responsible for making sure the Charter is complied with and may provide direction, or step in, if it considers the standard of engagement anticipated by the Charter has not been met.

A community panel process has been used to help shape the principles and outcomes of this Charter, supported by further community, council and industry consultation. In response to the feedback, a Community Engagement Charter Guide has been prepared for release with the Charter. It provides guidance on engagement processes, practices and behaviours that satisfy the principles.

The Charter will help build trust and confidence in the planning system by providing an engagement framework that is robust and adaptable. We intend to promote genuine engagement through our own activities.

## What is the role of the Charter?

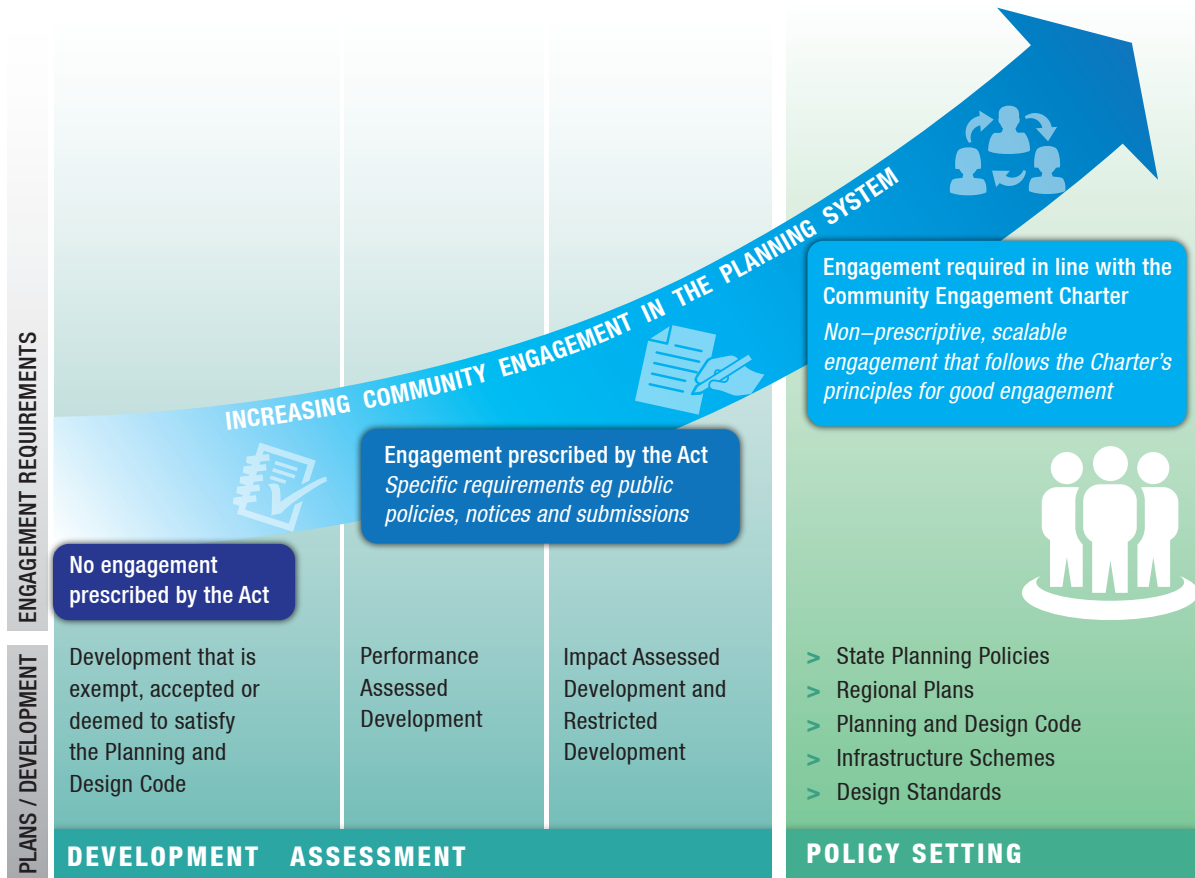
The Charter has a statutory role under the *Planning, Development and Infrastructure Act 2016*. The Act prescribes that the Charter must be used to guide public participation with respect to the preparation and amendment of designated policies, strategies and schemes as set out in the table below. The Charter also contains methods to measure the success and effectiveness of the engagement process and is supported by a Guide that provides step-by-step advice on putting the Charter into practice.

Designated Policies, Strategies and Schemes	Entity
State Planning Policies	State Planning Commission
Regional Plans	Joint Planning Board State Planning Commission
The Planning and Design Code	Chief Executive Officer of DPTI State Planning Commission Council Joint Planning Board Government Agency
Design Standards	State Planning Commission
Infrastructure Delivery Scheme	Scheme Co-ordinator

Under the Act, entities that are responsible for preparing or amending designated policies, strategies and schemes are required to comply with the Charter for the purposes of consultation. They are responsible for the preparation and implementation of a community engagement plan that meets the principles and performance outcomes of the Charter. However, the State Planning Commission may specify that the entity consults with a particular person or body.

If the State Planning Commission considers an entity has not complied with the Charter, it may require that entity to do so. The State Planning Commission or the Minister for Planning is not compelled to accept any of the above documents until it is satisfied with the engagement process. If necessary, the State Planning Commission may undertake the engagement on behalf of the entity and recover the associated costs.

The Charter seeks to strengthen engagement up front in the development of planning policies, strategies and schemes. It does not have a statutory role in the assessment of development applications. Separate and specific requirements for the public notification of certain classes of development applications are outlined in the Act and the procedures to be followed will be subsequently determined by regulation (see adjacent figure).



**COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT IN THE PLANNING SYSTEM**

(As required by the Planning, Development and Infrastructure Act, 2016)

## Structure of the Charter

The Charter includes the following components:

- Mandatory requirements: Actions that must be included in engagement plans.
- Principles: A set of principles which guide engagement.
- Performance outcomes: The outcomes you would see from successful engagement.
- Measuring performance: Types of measures for measuring performance.

## Mandatory requirements

An entity to which this Charter applies must comply with the following mandatory requirements that are applicable, based on the consultation category below. Where the mandatory requirements do not apply, an entity must have regard to, and seek to achieve, the principles and performance outcomes that apply under the Charter.

The State Planning Commission, or an entity acting with the approval of the State Planning Commission, may adopt an alternative way to achieving compliance with the mandatory requirements if the State Planning Commission is satisfied that the alternative way is at least as effective in achieving the public consultation requirements under the Charter. An entity will therefore need to obtain the approval of the State Planning Commission for any variation of the mandatory requirements.

Consultation Category	Mandatory requirement
Proposals that are specifically relevant to a particular Council or Councils (where Council did not initiate the proposal).	That Council or Councils must be directly notified of the proposal and consulted.
Proposals that are generally relevant to Councils.	The Local Government Association must be notified in writing and consulted.
A proposal to enter a place within the Planning and Design Code as a place of local heritage value.	The owner of any land on which the place resides, must be directly notified in writing of the proposal and consulted for a minimum period of four weeks.
A proposal to amend the Planning and Design Code to include any heritage character or preservation policy that is similar in intent or effect to a local heritage listing.	The owner of any land on which the place resides, must be directly notified in writing of the proposal and consulted for a minimum period of four weeks.
Infrastructure delivery scheme.	Landowners affected by the scheme must be directly notified in writing of the scheme under section 166 of the PDI Act for a minimum of four weeks.

## Principles

The following principles describe what is important when engaging under this Charter. The principles guide good engagement.

The application of the principles is mandatory and they must be considered when a decision maker determines the appropriate approach to engagement. Each engagement may have a different purpose, and may be undertaken in different places, with different outside influences and with different people involved.

The principles are a reference point for good engagement. If a decision maker can 'tick off' on each of the principles as the engagement plan is designed and delivered, then the public can have confidence that the engagement will be appropriate and effective.

It is acknowledged that the decision making authority may not necessarily be able to accommodate all views in a final outcome. However engagement should enable the full spectrum of views to be captured and reported.

The principles are:

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



## Performance outcomes

To provide clarity about these principles the following descriptions and performance outcomes have been developed to inform what successful achievement of each principle would look like. The performance outcomes must be considered in the preparation of the engagement process and must be reported against at the conclusion of the process.

### Engagement is genuine

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

#### *Performance outcomes*

People had faith and confidence in the engagement process.

### Engagement is inclusive and respectful

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

#### *Performance outcomes*

Affected and interested people had the opportunity to participate and be heard.



### **Engagement is fit for purpose**

The process matches the significance of the planning change. It is value-for-money, targeted, flexible, scalable and timely. Innovative forms of technology-based public engagement should be considered where appropriate. For example, use of 3D models to visualise and interact with the proposals and smart phone applications notifying users of engagement opportunities nearby.

#### *Performance outcomes*

People were effectively engaged and satisfied with the process.

People were clear about the proposed change and how it would affect them.

### **Engagement is informed and transparent**

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

#### *Performance outcomes*

All relevant information was made available and people could access it.

People understood how their views were considered, the reasons for the outcomes and the final decision that was made.

### **Engagement processes are reviewed and improved**

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

#### *Performance outcomes*

The engagement was reviewed and improvements recommended.

## **Measuring performance**

Engagement is undertaken to achieve better outcomes, decisions, projects and policies. Establishing engagement objectives, and then measuring progress helps to gauge how successful the engagement process has been. Evaluation can build transparency and accountability. It can contribute to the evidence base, identify good engagement practice and improve future practice.

Planning for evaluation should commence as early as possible in the engagement process. The scope of activities in the evaluation will vary based on the purpose and scale of the engagement. Early planning enables identification of the criteria that could be used to measure success and the information to be collected to support this, as well as what tools and resources are required. Early evaluation planning also provides an opportunity to clarify the purpose and objectives of the engagement process.

There are a range of ways that performance can be measured including surveys, capturing the number of responses received, the general tone of feedback and a range of other techniques.

Following are some examples of the types of measures that could be considered when preparing an engagement plan. The Guide assists in planning for evaluation in the engagement plan.

Consideration in measuring performance		
Principles	Performance outcomes	Types of measures
Engagement is genuine	People had faith and confidence in the engagement process	<p>Was there an opportunity for different knowledge and perspectives to be shared?</p> <p>How well did the engagement process enable stakeholders and community issues and solutions to be identified?</p> <p>How did people interact with each other? Did the process build community capacity about planning?</p> <p>Would people participate in a similar process in the future?</p>
Engagement is inclusive and respectful	Affected and interested people had the opportunity to participate and be heard.	<p>Did everyone who is impacted and/or interested have an opportunity to participate?</p> <p>Was there an opportunity for different knowledge and perspectives to be shared?</p>
Engagement is fit for purpose	<p>People were effectively engaged and satisfied with the process.</p> <p>People were clear about the proposed changes and how it may affect them.</p>	<p>Did people feel the process enabled appropriate input?</p> <p>Did people understand how to participate in the engagement?</p> <p>Did people understand what was being proposed?</p>
Engagement is informed and transparent	<p>All relevant information was made available and people could access it.</p> <p>People understood how their views were considered, the reasons for the outcomes and the final decision.</p>	<p>Did people have access to the information they needed?</p> <p>How was participant input considered in the final decision? How did it add value?</p> <p>Does reporting adequately capture the spectrum of participant views?</p>
Engagement processes are reviewed and improved	The engagement was reviewed and improvements recommended.	Were learnings about the process documented?

## Definitions

### State Planning Policies

The State's overarching goals or requirements for the planning system (and to be given effect through the various instruments prepared in the system).

[www.saplanningportal.sa.gov.au/our\\_new\\_system/state\\_planning\\_policies](http://www.saplanningportal.sa.gov.au/our_new_system/state_planning_policies)

### Regional Plans

A long-term vision for a region or area, including provisions about the integration of land use, transport infrastructure and the public realm, and including maps and plans that relate to spatial patterns that are relevant to the long-term vision.

[www.saplanningportal.sa.gov.au/our\\_new\\_system/regional\\_planning](http://www.saplanningportal.sa.gov.au/our_new_system/regional_planning)

### Planning and Design Code

A comprehensive set of policies, rules and classifications which may be selected and applied in the various parts of the State for the purposes of development assessment and related matters within the State. The Code will include the use of zones, subzones, overlays and policies.

[www.saplanningportal.sa.gov.au/our\\_new\\_system/planning\\_and\\_design\\_code](http://www.saplanningportal.sa.gov.au/our_new_system/planning_and_design_code)

### Design Standards

A design standard that relates to the public realm or infrastructure, which may specify design principles, design standards, or design guidelines.

### Infrastructure Delivery Schemes

A scheme approved by the Minister for Planning in relation to the provision of basic or general infrastructure, and the funding arrangements associated with the provision of that infrastructure.

[www.saplanningportal.sa.gov.au/our\\_new\\_system/infrastructure\\_schemes](http://www.saplanningportal.sa.gov.au/our_new_system/infrastructure_schemes)

### Designated Entity

A person or entity that is approved by the Minister for Planning to undertake the legislative processes, (including engagement) involved in preparing or amending a designated instrument.

### Designated Instrument

A state planning policy, regional plan, the planning and design code and a design standard are Designated instruments.

