

12 February 2024

Hon Chris Bishop
Minister for Finance, Housing, Infrastructure, RMA Reform, and Sport & Recreation
Parliament Office
Private Bag 18888, Parliament Buildings
Wellington 6160
NEW ZEALAND

DELIVERED BY EMAIL: Chris.Bishop@parliament.govt.nz

Dear Hon Chris Bishop

Fast track consenting requires quality engagement

As the Government progresses actions outlined as part of the 100 Day Action Plan, including progressing changes to resource management and establishing a new fast-track consenting regime, it is important to ensure that quality community and stakeholder engagement is included as a strategic consideration.

The International Association for Public Participation (IAP2) Australasia would like to take this opportunity to applaud the decision by Government to ensure that New Zealand cities and towns can see the benefits of major projects more quickly and more affordably.

We support and are pleased by Government's desire to encourage economic growth and provide improvements for both the environment and the community. However, to deliver sustainable and valued project outcomes, it is critical that quality engagement with stakeholders and communities continue.

Call to action

IAP2 Australasia as the peak body for engagement professionals, representing almost 15,000 members, calls for a commitment to ensuring that quality engagement remains an integral component of fast-tracked projects. Why you ask? Keep reading.

Minimise social risk through engagement

Conducting quality engagement to support these significant investment projects provides:

- an important strategy in minimising social, political and financial risk;
- stakeholders the opportunity to input into the project providing valuable local knowledge;
- the government with a channel to promote and increase understanding of its agenda; and
- simply it provides best practice for the long-term reputation and legacy of being good stewards of public spend.

The evidence for engagement

Evidence for increased engagement to reduce risk and speed up the delivery of projects to support economic growth is compelling and includes:

- License to operate is the No. 1 ranked risk.
Source: Top 10 Business Risks and Opportunities (EY)
- Community opposition has contributed to the delay, cancellation or mothballing of more than \$30B of infrastructure projects in the last decade.
Source: Australian National University, Institute for Infrastructure in Society
- Better functioning cities and towns could deliver a \$29B increase in GDP in the long term.
Source: The Australian Infrastructure Audit 2019
- 82% of businesses said “communicating and engaging with stakeholders openly was seen as the most critical factor for building trust”
Source: Creating value and balancing stakeholder needs (KPMG and AICD survey – 2019).

IAP2 Australasia policy position

As the peak body for the community and stakeholder engagement sector, IAP2 Australasia, believes that engagement, when done well, improves social, environmental and economic outcomes and increases trust in the democratic process.

In closing

IAP2 Australasia calls for and encourages the NZ Government to make a commitment to ensuring that authentic engagement remains an integral component of fast track projects, improving environmental, social and economic outcomes.

If you have any further questions, please do feel free to contact me directly using the details provided below.

Yours sincerely



Marion Short

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About IAP2 Australasia

The International Association for Public Participation (IAP2) is the leading public participation organisation globally which seeks to promote and improve the practice of community and stakeholder engagement.

As an international leader in public participation, IAP2 has developed tools that are widely used and acknowledged. These are the **IAP2 Core Values for Public Participation** for use in the development and implementation of public participation processes; and the **IAP2 Spectrum** which assists with the selection of the level of participation that defines the public's role in any community engagement program. The Spectrum is widely used and is quoted in most community engagement manuals.

Additionally, there is the **Quality Assurance Standard for Community and Stakeholder Engagement**, which is recognised as the international standard for public participation practice.

IAP2 Australasia has almost 15,000 members throughout Australia and New Zealand – and is committed to advancing the practice of community and stakeholder engagement through education, advocacy and building partnerships.

Policy position

As the peak body for the community and stakeholder engagement sector, IAP2 Australasia, believes that engagement, when done well, improves environmental, social and economic outcomes and increases trust in the democratic process.

We advocate for all communities to be authentically engaged in decisions that affect them through education and increasing awareness of authentic engagement and all its benefits, in alignment with the IAP2 Quality Assurance Standard for Community and Stakeholder Engagement.

Advocacy position

IAP2 Australasia advocates:

1. That communities are authentically engaged in decisions that affect them; and
2. for engagement to be mandated and defined in legislation, policy and guidelines.

Authentic engagement recognises the six principles included in the UN Human Rights Council Guidelines on the effective implementation on the right to participate in public affairs;

- Enabling environment
- Safety
- Equality
- Empowerment
- Openness
- Remedies