

MEETING MINUTES

Meeting

Team Name: Communication and Engagement Advisory Group

Date: 7 August 2024

Time: 5:00pm-7:00pm

Venue: Port Stephens Council Admin Building and Zoom

Chairperson: Councillor Anderson

Minutes: Elizabeth Akerman

Purpose of Meeting: To provide advice and guidance on communications and engagement projects

Attendance

Councillor Anderson Port Stephens Council	Cassandra Schmitzer Community representative	Councillor Wells Port Stephens Council	Tanya Martin Community representative
Ben van der Wijngaart Community representative	Angela Peace Community representative	Kelly Hammond Community representative	Ros Armstrong Community representative
Emily Livens Port Stephens Council	Elizabeth Akerman Port Stephens Council		

Apologies

Margarete Ritchie Community representative	William (Bill) Doran Community representative	Paul Baxter Community representative	Greg Brown Community representative
Councillor Kafer Port Stephens Council	Lauren Whitelaw Community representative	Casey Freeman Community representative	Janelle Gardner Port Stephens Council

Item	Topic	Time	Responsible Officer	Action	Status/Date to be Completed
1.0	WELCOME AND APOLOGIES				
1.1	Acknowledgement of country and welcome	5:05	Chairperson	RECORD: Completed by Cr Anderson	N/A
1.2	Warm up – your life highlight since the last meeting	5:11	Chairperson	RECORD: All participated in the exercise	N/A
2.0	FEEDBACK – COMMUNICATION AND ENGAGEMENT PLANNING				
2.1	General feedback since the last meeting	5:12	Emily Livens	Session was recorded and will be shared with the group. RECORD: We've received feedback which will be addressed as part of our agenda item, 2.3.	With minutes (August 2024)
2.2	Use of easy-read docs	5:13 mins	Emily Livens	RECORD: Agenda item raised by Bill. Council gave an overview of what an easy-read document was and provided examples. Pros and Cons of Easy Read documents were provided and discussed. Wellbeing Strategy has an action item to identify and convert key strategic plans that can be interpreted into easy read versions. Group discussion centred around which documents should be converted first. Suggestions included documents that were more practical such as procurement documents, grants and funding guidelines, applications and forms. The Community Strategic Plan was also suggested as one of the first key plans. Also, it was suggested that the new disability advisory group (not yet formed) would be in a	

Item	Topic	Time	Responsible Officer	Action	Status/Date to be Completed
				<p>better position to select appropriate documents than the CEAG group.</p> <p>ACTION: Provide CEAG feedback to relevant internal teams.</p>	Immediate (PSC)
2.3	Evaluation of Lodge and Request system via the website including recent feedback regarding acknowledgement automation	5:47 mins	Emily Livens	<p>RECORD: This was a suggested agenda item from our meeting 3 April 2024.</p> <p>Council provided an overview of the key changes and user benefits of the new Report, request and apply system.</p> <p>General discussion of group centred around the use of the system and website in general. Feedback from the group included that the website had improved significantly over the last few years.</p> <p>Feedback received regarding the lack of information in the automated acknowledgement especially when making work if multiple reports are made was discussed.</p> <p>Service commitments eg Customer Experience Charter confirmed with acknowledgements to be made within 7 days and substantive reply is within 20 business days.</p> <p>ACTION: Group encouraged to use new Report, request and apply feature on website and report feedback to yoursay@portstephens.nsw.gov.au.</p> <p>ACTION: CEAG feedback (including 1/ smaller descriptions to help mobile users and 2/ photos are difficult to add to the 'report') to be provided to relevant internal teams.</p>	<p>Immediate (All)</p> <p>Immediate (PSC)</p>

Item	Topic	Time	Responsible Officer	Action	Status/Date to be Completed
2.4	Growing our subscribers plan	1:05 mins	Elizabeth Akerman	<p>RECORD: Key aspects of the draft plan for ‘Growing our subscribers’ were presented to the group.</p> <p>This plan’s purpose is to help meet the communications and engagement strategy annual subscription and membership targets.</p> <p>Some of the group suggestions to improve the plan included:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Better explanation of the purpose of the plan rather than meeting subscription and membership targets • Providing an easy read document • Provide an incentive to sign up • Sharing of success stories, ‘pull on heart-strings’ including how you can really influence outcomes through participation • Don’t use ‘Have your say’ phrase rather explain how the data is used by the elected body to make decisions • Use community groups to help share information • Physical share through posters at halls and community buildings, over 55 villages etc. • Website temporary banner <p>ACTION: Incorporate group suggestions where possible into plan</p>	Immediate (PSC)

Item	Topic	Time	Responsible Officer	Action	Status/Date to be Completed
3.0	OTHER MATTERS				
3.1	Next meeting, thank you and close	1:47 mins	Chairperson	<p>RECORD: We ran out of time for Smart Parking Portal 2.0 plan agenda item. This is now deferred to a future meeting pending timing of portal roll-out.</p> <p>As this is probably the last meeting of the current CEAG group a discussion regarding the usefulness of the CEAG feedback to Council processes was undertaken.</p> <p>Feedback back to group members included if a project had been via the CEAG group the suggestions and advice were generally adopted and approach endorsed internally.</p> <p>All group members were thanked for their participation and involvement in the CEAG meetings.</p> <p>The future of the current CEAG memberships and the other advisory groups will be determined following the upcoming election. As the term of the advisory groups has been quite short we may just see who would like to stay on and who wouldn't.</p> <p>ACTION: Next meeting date to be confirmed following Council elections</p>	In due time (PSC)

MEETING CLOSED AT: 7pm

NEXT MEETINGS

Date: TBC



Time: TBC

Venue: Port Stephens Council Admin Building and Zoom

ATTACHMENT 1 – 7 AUGUST MEETING POWERPOINT PRESENTATION

Communications & Engagement Advisory Group

7 August 2024

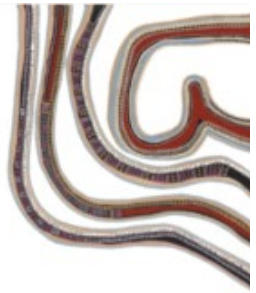


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Acknowledgement of Country

We acknowledge the Worimi as the original Custodians and inhabitants of Port Stephens.

May we walk the road to tomorrow with mutual respect and admiration as we care for the beautiful land and waterways together.



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It's always good to get to know each other more!

What's a life highlight since the last meeting?



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General feedback


General feedback regarding communications and engagement

Feedback received about the 'report, request and apply automatic acknowledgements' will be incorporated into the upcoming agenda item.



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Easy Read documents



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Easy Read documents

What are they?

Easy Read documents are simplified documents which usually combine short, jargon-free sentences with simple images to help explain the content

Creative Australia example

Wellbeing Strategy and DIAP examples



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Easy Read documents

Benefits:

- Helps to provide information that is easy for everyone to read and understand
- Helpful for people from non-English speaking backgrounds, dyslexia, low literacy levels

Disadvantages:

- Specialist writers required
- Loss of specific, detailed information




We asked people how we could make Port Stephens more **accessible**

Accessible means that something is easy to use. It also means a place is easy to get to and easy to get around.

We also asked people how we could make Port Stephens more **inclusive**

Inclusive means that everyone can join in.



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Easy Read documents

Wellbeing Strategy action

- Identify and convert key strategic plans that can be interpreted into easy read version

Group discussion

- Let's try and identify which documents do you think we should convert first?



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Report, request and apply



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Report, request and apply

Key changes:

- 'Report, request and apply' replaces 'Report and Request' and now includes A-Z forms eg apply
- Brings it all into one area of the website and then drills down to more specialist areas
- Website also includes better search functionality



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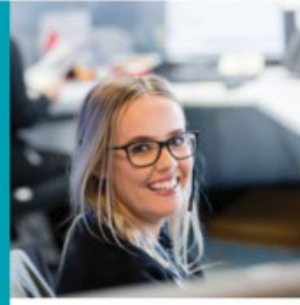
Report, request and apply

Feedback re automated acknowledgement:

Lack of connection between original report or request and acknowledgement
Made worse if multiple reports are made on the same day and also if locator pin to provide address isn't used

Query regarding service timing:

Yes we can confirm our service commitments are: acknowledgements within 7 days and substantive reply is within 20 business days.



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Growing our subscribers



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Growing our subscribers

Key challenges:

- General disinterest
- Use of personal details without explicit consent
- Reaching non-digital residents

Key risks:

- Engagement results received are not statistically valid
- Strategy targets are not met
- Non-digital residents are left isolated



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Growing our subscribers

Aug – Sep 2024

IAP2 level – Inform, Involve

What's are our objectives

- Increase participation levels in our existing opt-in subscription memberships and databases
- Meet Anti-Spam and Privacy Act regulatory requirements
- Existing data has an opportunity to be cleaned and refreshed
- Empower non-digital residents with improved technological skills and confidence

Who are our stakeholders?

- Internal teams - CX, Library, VIC,
- Residents and ratepayers
- Non-digital residents and ratepayers
- Community service providers

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Growing our subscribers

Communication methods

- Media release
- Social media including paid social
- Council website including form to update Council records
- Newspaper notices
- YourPort printed issue
- Direct emails to community services
- Flyer/Poster
- QR code on all collateral
- On hold messaging

Engagement methods

- Incorporate into community catchups, events and other engagements where possible
- Provide training and advice to staff at various locations especially libraries, CX at Admin building and Visitor Centre.

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Growing our subscribers

Key messages

Sign up, learn more and get involved!

- E-newsletters
- HaveyourSay membership
- Social media

Privacy/Anti-Spam regulations

- Protection against spam emails and your privacy

Improve digital skills

- Sick of asking your kids or grand kids for tech help? Learn more at our one-on-one Tech Connect sessions at Council libraries
- Need help signing up to a Council e-newsletter or our HaveYourSay platform - ask a staff member for help.



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Thank you!

ATTACHMENT 2 – Ongoing Action List

Item	Action	Responsible Officer	Comment	Date Completed
MEETING: 7 AUGUST 2024				
2.2 Use of easy-read docs				
	ACTION: Provide CEAG feedback to relevant internal teams.	PSC	Complete	20 Aug 2024
2.3 Evaluation of Lodge and Request system				
	ACTION: Group encouraged to use new Report, request and apply feature on website and report feedback.	All group	Ongoing	
	ACTION: CEAG feedback (including 1/ smaller descriptions to help mobile users and 2/ photos are difficult to add to the 'report') to be provided to relevant internal teams.	PSC	Complete	20 Aug 2024
2.4 Growing our subscribers plan				
	ACTION: Incorporate group suggestions where possible into plan	PSC	Complete	14 Aug 2024
3.1 Next meeting, thank you and close				
	ACTION: Next meeting date to be confirmed following Council elections (14 September 2024)	PSC	In process	
MEETING: 3 APRIL 2024				
2.1 General feedback since the last meeting				
	ACTION: Agenda and discussion to clearly reflect areas of influence for CEAG members on the various projects	PSC	Ongoing	
	ACTION: ToR is explicit in defining role of group and should be resent	PSC	Complete	21 Aug 2024
	ACTION: Operational communication matters are to be sent to haveyoursay@portstephens.nsw.gov.au email addressed to be actioned as appropriate	All group	Ongoing	
	ACTION: Use more direct wording in emails and individualise emails per subject for better participation	PSC	Ongoing	

Item	Action	Responsible Officer	Comment	Date Completed
2.2 Housing Strategy Review Public Exhibition				
	ACTION: Investigate whether zoom presentation can be sent to forum participants who cannot attend	PSC	Link is available on direct request. Action no longer relevant as strategy is adopted.	20 Aug 2024
2.3 Shoal Bay Place Plan Lessons Learnt				
	ACTION: PSC to check privacy and antis spam laws with regard to bulk mail outs.	PSC	In process	
	ACTION: Use more direct and emotional language in communications for better engagement.	PSC	Ongoing	Ongoing
	ACTION: Provide CEAG feedback to Strategic Planning team re: Anna Bay Place Plan next steps.	PSC	Complete	20 Aug 2024
MEETING: 18 October 2023				
2.1 Feedback from previous meeting				
	ACTION: Review the process (Smart Parking submission lost)	PSC	Complete	Oct 2023
MEETING: 20 September 2023				
2.2 Local Housing Strategy Review Presentation				
	ACTION: Council staff to update the stakeholder listing and circulate to CEAG member (excluding private details) for value add.	PSC	Complete	From 20 Sep 2023
	ACTION: Update key messaging in the plan to include that consideration will be given to infrastructure upgrades as housing increases	PSC	Complete	From 20 Sep 2023
	ACTION: Undertake an EOI to attract general community representation for the Housing forum	PSC	Complete	From 20 Sep 2023
2.3 Night at the Beach event				
	ACTION: Report feedback to PSC Events team	PSC	Complete	18 Oct 2023
2.4 Meeting format discussion				
	ACTION: Next meeting to be scheduled for 5-7pm (longer time)	PSC	Complete	From 20 Sep 2023