

**FAIR GO RATES SYSTEM
ENGAGEMENT TECHNICAL WORKING GROUP**

**Notes from the fourth meeting
6 October 2016**

Attendees:			
Organisation	Name	Organisation	Name
Essential Services Commission	Angelina Garces	Latrobe City Council	Edith Heiberg
Essential Services Commission	Lisa Horsburgh	Local Government Victoria	Kathy Pryor
Essential Services Commission	Andrew Chow	Manningham City Council	Sharon Prince
Essential Services Commission	Merryn Wilson	Melbourne City Council	Desley Renton
KJA Associates (Independent Facilitator)	Kathy Jones	Mitchell Shire Council	Rosemary Scott
Baw Baw Shire Council	Malcolm Lewis	Victorian Local Governance Association	Dr Sarah Ewing
IAP2	Mark Ritch		
Apologies:			
City of Greater Geelong	Laura Potter	Mount Alexander Shire Council	Vicky Mason
Hume City Council	Joel Farrell	Municipal Association of Victoria	Owen Harvey Beavis
Hume City Council	Joel Farrell	Strathbogie Shire Council	David Woodhams
Knox City Council	Kim Rawlings	Wyndham City Council	Jenny McMahon
Manningham City Council	Juanita Haisman	Yarriambiack Shire Council	Ray Campling
Monash City Council	Ross Goeman		

The ESC has formed an Engagement Technical Working Group. The purpose of this group is for the ESC to have input from council professionals into its engagement guidance material and, conversely, to provide feedback to councils about the decisions and actions that the ESC has made in the context of councils' engagement programs. The attached meeting notes are a reflection of the themes of these discussions undertaken at the meeting between the ETWG and the ESC on 6 October 2016.

Purpose of meeting:

- To review the drafted updated and new community engagement reference materials developed for councils for the 2017-18 rating year to be released 21 October 2016.

Key Discussion Points:

General comments:

- The complexity of engagement for multi-year higher cap applications is not described enough. Further discussion of this needs to be embedded in the engagement section of the Guidance for Councils. Councils engaging on budget scenarios need to be emphasised.
- Insert a note for councils questioning whether they are being financially responsible if they do not apply for a higher cap.

Redrafting comments on the draft Top 10 Tips:

- Add introduction to stress the need for good financial management and access to good information prior to actual engagement.
- Tip no. 1 – Develop a robust documented engagement plan

- Tip no. 3 – Avoid focusing on a single issue, consider all the consequences and trade-offs. Prioritise your response with your community
- Tip no. 4 – add transparent
- Tip no. 7 – Value of engagement is proportionate to issue
- Tip no. 8 – seek examples of good practice that apply to your situation
- Tip no. 9 – ensure plan is evaluated
- Tip no. 10 – Change “addressed” to “considered”

Comments on the draft Case Studies:

- Streamline case studies – formatting, add evaluation against the principles, explain capacity and capability in each.
- Need to position against other guidance material – contextualise the introduction.

Comments on the Engagement Narrative Map (formerly evidence matrix)

- Use described not demonstrated
- “Must” vs “could” – check for consistency across all documents
- Supporting doc list should be replaced by what must be shown e.g. plan, evaluation, info materials, ongoing engagement
- Consistency of language around principles

Comments on the Community Engagement Reference Material document

- Cross reference to top ten tips, case studies and engagement narrative map with links
- Embed separate documents into complete doc with links
- Check and edit e.g. 2.1. Guidance for Council needs to be checked
- Delete table before 2.3
- Table of contents
- Usefulness of the Y reporting tool?

Actions:

Item	Actions	Responsibility	Date
1.	Timing of community survey to work with rate capping – additional questions are costly. E.g. over the past 12 months has your understanding of your council’s budgeting process improved?	LGV	For consideration
2.	Workshops for councils (inc. community engagement)	LH. Members of ETWG to provide assistance when in local areas	November
3.	Cross check all documents for could/may and should	KJ	ASAP
4.	Investigate the usefulness of the “y” graphic	AC	ASAP
5.	Collate ideas from the roadshow	LH	End November
6.	Guidance material published	ESC	October 17
7.	Targeted pre-application process	ESC	January
8.	Assessment period	ESC	April/May