

Fair Go Rates system

Engagement technical working group

Notes from meeting 6 (2nd meeting for 2017) 25 May 2017

Organisation	Name	Organisation	Name
Attendees			
Development Victoria	Mark Ritch	Local Government Victoria	Youseff Youseff
Essential Services Commission	Michelle Bryne	Manningham City Council	Juanita Haisman
Essential Services Commission	Andrew Chow	Melbourne City Council	Georgie Meyer
Essential Services Commission	Angelina Garces	Mitchell Shire Council	Rosemary Scott
Essential Services Commission	Lisa Horsburgh	Monash City Council	Ross Goeman
Essential Services Commission	Freya McCormick	Victorian Local Governance Association	Bo Li
Greater Geelong City Council	Erin McHugh	Yarriambiack Shire Council	Ray Campling
Hume City Council	Joel Farrell		
Apologies			
Baw Baw Shire Council	Malcolm Lewis	Municipal Association of Victoria	John Hennessey Owen Harvey Beavis
Knox City Council	Kim Rawlings	Strathbogie Shire Council	David Woodhams
Latrobe City Council	Edith Heiberg	Wyndham City Council	Binda Gokhale

Purpose of the working group

In 2016 the Essential Services Commission formed an engagement technical working group. The group is a forum for sharing ideas and expertise in community engagement with the aim of building capacity across the local government sector. The group is a conduit between the sector and the Commission and helps the Commission to tailor and refine its guidance to the local government sector on the engagement requirements for applications for a higher rate cap.

Purpose of this meeting

The purpose of this meeting is to discuss the 2017 engagement work plan, agree on activities and outcomes, and start allocating responsibilities and tasks.

Introduction and recap of last meeting

The group reviewed the notes from the last meeting on 13 April 2017.

The group agreed to publish the terms of reference on the Commission's website.

The group discussed the Victorian Auditor-General's Office (VAGO) audit of public participation and community engagement in the local government sector. The group noted that there is crossover between the objectives of the engagement technical working group and the findings and recommendations of VAGO's audit report. The group flagged exploring this at a future meeting.

Discussion of work plan for 2017

The group reviewed the draft 2017 engagement work plan.

An additional activity was suggested – a survey of the local government sector which would help inform the workshops the Commission will run in late 2017.

Community engagement forum

The group supported having a Fair Go Rates system engagement conference, hosted by the Commission in collaboration with the sector, in the second half of 2017.

The group brainstormed potential topics and themes, which included:

- evaluation of engagement
- engagement planning
- documentation of engagement / providing evidence
- demonstrating the outcomes of engagement and the link to decision making (closing the loop)
- engaging on trade-offs (e.g. rate increases, service levels)
- engaging on needs instead of wants
- the role of community plans, and integration with financial planning
- engagement policies and frameworks
- government policy settings
- case studies.

The group brainstormed potential speakers for the forum, which included:

- council staff (engagement practitioners and other staff)
- councilors
- peak bodies
- Essential Services Commission
- Local Government Victoria
- Victorian Auditor-General's Office
- engagement experts
- community members / community advocates

The working group decided to have a teleconference before the next meeting with interested members to help shape a draft agenda.

Actions

Action	Deadline	Responsibility
1 Publish terms of reference on the commission's website	June	Freya
2 Create a timeline of actions	ASAP	Freya
3 Confirm VAGO's presentation for the July meeting	ASAP	Commission staff
4 Send events or resources that should be on the list of community engagement events and resources to the commission (to Freya)	Ongoing	All
5 Distribute list of community engagement events and resources	Periodically	Freya, ETWG
6 Consider publishing list of community engagement events and resources	June	Commission staff
7 Find out if there will be a LGPro joint network conference this year, and explore potential for ETWG involvement	June	Joel
8 Have an out-of-session teleconference on the community engagement forum	June	Interested members of ETWG
9 Draft agenda and logistics plan for community engagement forum (follow on from action 8)	By next meeting	Commission staff
10 Draft a survey for the sector, to be reviewed by the ETWG	TBC	Commission staff, ETWG
11 Give an update on the local government act review	TBC	Youssef

Meeting schedule

Meeting	Date	Key purpose
Meeting 7 (3 rd for 2017)	13 July	Hear from VAGO about audit of local government sector Discuss draft plan for the engagement conference
Meeting 8 (4 th for 2017)	September	Review Fair Go Rates system guidance material