

IAP2 Australasia - State of the Practice Project

What is the State of the Practice?

The State of the Practice project (SOTP) aims to provide IAP2A with an ongoing sense of how well public participation is being conducted in Australasia, including its influence in decision making. SOTP also aims to generate evidence of broader impacts of participation. SOTP is envisaged as a long-term, on-going process of reflection, learning and capacity building.

Why are we doing it?

SOTP will, over time, provide IAP2A with an assessment of public participation practice across Australasia. This will help IAP2A advance the practice by focusing attention on the things that matter most, providing an evidence-base for advocacy and a forum for the community, practitioners and decision makers to deepen their shared understandings of what leading practice means.

Overview of how are we doing it?

IAP2A are holding regional SOTP summits in November or early December 2010 in centres across Australasia using a new participatory evaluation methodology. The methodology blends features of the Most Significant Change evaluation method and Appreciative Inquiry. Regional report cards will be produced for each of the summits.

IAP2A will hold regional summits in Perth, Adelaide, Melbourne, Sydney, Brisbane and Auckland and is looking for voluntary regional organisers, facilitators and other volunteers to organise, facilitate and report on the regional summits. The NSW and New Zealand summits have already been held.

Once the regional summits have been completed, an Australasian report card will be developed based on the regional reports using a similar participatory evaluation methodology. The organiser and facilitator from each of the regions will be brought to Melbourne to develop this and review the SOTP process and summit methodology. The overview meeting will be held in March 2011. IAP2A aims to publish the Australasian report card in April 2011.

The first round of SOTP summits will assess the state of public participation using a simple programme logic (foundations, reach, quality, impact) using, if the Victorian pilot is indicative, 'patchy' data. Over time, by repeating the process every 2 years, the meaningfulness of subsequent snapshots of practice will improve as:

- the underlying programme logic is adjusted to better model the 'real world'
- our knowledge of the data and its quality improve
- more people understand what the SOTP work is about.

Roles: Who will do the work?

The SOTP project will require strategic direction, project management and support from the centre and regional decision making, organisation and implementation.

Strategic direction, project management and support

The strategic direction for the SOTP project is outlined in the IAP2A Strategic Plan 2010-2012. The SOTP work will enable participants to influence the public participation agenda and IAP2A will formally respond to SOTP recommendations, including those that IAP2A is not able to address directly.

The IAP2A **Practice Sub-committee** has developed a detailed project plan and will oversee the project by:

- Working through IAP2A Regional Co-ordinators to recruit SOTP regional organisers and facilitators¹
- Organising a project briefing and summit methodology training.² This will be done via series of webinars (probably 2) in mid-August (date to be set with participants)
- Project managing by working with regional organisers, facilitators and volunteers as well as with the IAP2A executive and administrative staff to maintain the momentum of the project
- Developing a communications plan and a web presence for the project, including engaging with other professional associations and peak bodies
- Recruiting a volunteer to administer a SOTP survey to gather data for the regional summits. Regional Co-ordinators may be able to assist by identify possible 'volunteers'
- Contracting a person to attend each of the regional summits to:
 - act as scribe
 - analyse summit outputs, including the process evaluation questionnaires, and draft regional report cards
- Organising the workshop to develop the Australasian report card and review of the SOTP process
- Publishing the Australasian report card
- Developing a plan for the next SOTP snapshot
- Mentoring and supporting regional organisers, facilitators and volunteers.

Keith Greaves, the volunteer who organised the pilot SOTP summit in Victoria, has offered to share his experience with regional organisers and facilitators and to assist the Practice Committee.

The **IAP2 Executive Officer**, Heather Barton, will seek sponsorship for the SOTP project as a whole and will negotiate regional sponsorship deals for venues, etc.

The **IAP2 office** can help with:

- Contracting goods and services (e.g. regional venue hire (if necessary), catering)
- Administering regional event registration and communications
- Negotiating sponsorships deals

Regional decision making, organisation and implementation

The success of the project will hinge on the work of regional organisers and facilitators. They will work closely together and support each other to hold regional summits. They will:

- 'Attend' a project briefing and summit methodology training via webinar technology in mid-August. Dates to be set with participants.
- Set the time and date for their regional summit
- Find a suitable venue for up to 50 participants
- Identify potential sponsors for the regional summit and then notify the IAP2A Executive Officer so she can formalise arrangements
- Recruit, organise and work with local volunteers to collect, collate and present **data** for the summit and help **identify and recruit participants**. See the sections below on data and recruitment.
- Provide materials for the summit (e.g. 2 stick walls, templates, pens, etc)
- Finalise and circulate an summit agenda and information pack at least a week before the summit
- Facilitate the summit
- Prepare a regional report card by working with the contracted scribe/analyst/report writer, other regional volunteers and a member of the Practice Committee
- Attend a 1-day workshop in probably in Sydney on 5 February 2011 to develop the Australasian report card and review the SOTP process. Expenses will be paid by IAP2A. This location and date has

¹ IAP2 Regional Coordinators may or may not wish to organise/facilitate regional SOTP summits. If not, their assistance will be needed to identify regional organisers/facilitators and volunteers.

been chosen to coincide with a conference on deliberative democracy that will feature some of the world's leading theorists and practitioners.

As has happened after the pilot summit in Victoria, it is hoped that regional organisers, facilitators, volunteers and/or participants will build on the work of their summits in regionally appropriate ways. These could include organising regional events to consider next steps, and presenting at local conferences, etc.

How long will it take to organise a summit?

It took a small team of Victorian volunteers and staff from Clear Horizon one month to organise the pilot SOTP summit that was conducted in Victoria in March 2010. The voluntary organisers of the pilot estimate that 2-3 months of preparation time would have been ideal.

The summit methodology

A new participatory evaluation summit methodology has been developed for the SOTP project by [Clear Horizon](#). It blends features of the Most Significant Change evaluation method and Appreciative Inquiry. A summit will take a whole day to run (say 9.30 – 5.00) and produces a 'report card' and ideas for improving the methodology. See the report card and video from the Victorian pilot to get a sense of what a summit is about.

The quality of the SOTP process depends in part on regional organisers and facilitators understanding and applying to the methodology. Participants must also be able to assess similar SOTP data presented in similar ways, and have opportunities to reflect on the quality of the summit methodology. To achieve these ends:

- Regional organisers and facilitators will 'attend' a project briefing and summit methodology training. This will be via webinar technology in mid-August 2010. The dates will be set with participants
- A facilitation guide has been prepared
- Templates for the presentation of data have been prepared
- A SOTP summit evaluation questionnaire has been prepared

Data

An internet survey was prepared to collect data on the SOTP as part of the Victorian pilot. This will be reviewed at the project briefing and a volunteer will then be found to administer it. Data will be sorted by region and sent to the regional organiser.

The regional organiser will also lead a team of volunteers to identified and collected regional data. This might include, for example:

- Historical data on the number and frequency of P2 training and educational events and conferences, and a review of the themes covered
- Historical data on the development of governmental and organisational P2 policies
- Analysis of how the language used to describe participation has changed
- Case studies
- Evaluation studies

Examples from the Victorian pilot will give regional organisers, facilitators and volunteers ideas for what sort of data needs to be collected and how to present it on the templates that have already been prepared. Data for summits should be reviewed by the summit facilitator and the Practice Development Sub-Committee.

Recruitment

The summit process has been designed for 30-50 participants and requires diversity to work well. The following table provides recruitment guidance on the categories of participant and approximate numbers for a 50-person summit.

Category	Comment	Number	Proportion
P2 practitioners	A spread across: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • state and local government • private sector • experienced - inexperienced 	30	60%
Non P2 practitioners	A spread across the following sorts of categories: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • senior managers • decision makers • members of NGO/not for profit organisations and the community 	9	18%
Professionals from other disciplines	E.g. planning, strategy, policy, human resources	9	18%
Academic	Possible fields include P2, politics, management, communications, science, technology and society studies	2	4%

The Regional organisers/facilitators will work with the Practice Development Sub-Committee to decide on the most appropriate way of recruiting such a diverse group of participants in their areas. Another dimension to factor in is ensuring participants from across each region, say from urban, town and rural contexts.

Possible approaches to recruit participants include:

- Personal invitations from the IAPA President will be sent to randomly select IAP2 members. The selections will be made from stratified IAP2 member lists. Further invitations will be sent later if more participants are needed.
- IAP2A will approach professional associations and peak bodies and invite them to nominate members for the summit events
- Regional organisers/facilitators may choose to ask a selection of IAP2A practitioners who have registered for the SOTP summit to invite people from their networks

IAP2A could call for people to register interest in participating in a summit but this is not necessarily the best strategy for recruiting a 'balance' sample.

Local knowledge will be needed to identify effective recruitment strategies for non-IAP2 members. Experience from the Victorian pilot indicates that IAP2A may not be well known by NGOs and the community, so a practical strategy for recruiting these people may be to ask a selection of IAP2A practitioners who register for the SOTP summit to invite people from their networks.

To recruit professionals from other disciplines, the regional organiser may ask the IAP2A Executive Officer to directly approach selected professional bodies. Alternatively, the regional organiser may choose to ask a selection of IAP2A practitioners who register for the SOTP summit to invite people from their networks.

Like other project decisions, 'representativeness' (and other project) objectives will need to be balanced with what is practically possible given time and resource constraints and local contexts.

Reporting

IAP2A will contract a person to attend each of the regional summits to:

- act as scribe at summits
- analyse summit outputs, including the process evaluation questionnaires, and draft regional report cards.

This person will have appropriate experience and knowledge of the methodology. Their work will be overseen by the regional organisers/facilitators and the Practice Committee.

Summit participants will review the regional report cards before they are published. At this stage, it is envisaged that regional report cards will look like the report card from the pilot and be downloadable from the internet.

At this stage, it is envisaged that the final Australasian SOTP report card will be designed as a 'coffee table' publication. It will be the sort of booklet that can make an impact even when browsed. A possible format could be similar to 'Engagement Story Report', which was published by NZ's Department of Conservation - see <http://www.doc.govt.nz/upload/documents/about-doc/role/policies-and-plans/engagement-story-report.pdf>.

Venues

Local knowledge should guide the selection of venues. The venue needs to provide for small table group work, enable participants to move easily from group to group and have wall space for displays.

It may be possible to find sponsored venues.³ It may also be possible to use Clifton's venues. The IAP2 office will help with bookings, catering, etc.

Scheduling

In scheduling regional summits, the following needs to be considered:

- The regional summits should take place in November or early December 2010
- Allow approximately 3 months to organise a regional summit
- Regional organisers and facilitators will decide exact dates with the Practice Committee
- It may also be possible to leverage other local events. For example, the Victorian pilot showed that SOTP summits and Leadership Breakfasts complement each other well. If possible, they should be bundled together on or about the same day.

Cost recovery

SOTP summits are not training events. Indeed, IAP2A is inviting its members and others to 'teach' us. Participants should not pay to attend, so funding will have to come from other IAP2A and from sponsorship. A project budget is outlined below.

Workshop to produce Australasian report card

The Practice Committee will organise a 1-day workshop, probably in Sydney on 5 February 2011 for the Practice Committee and regional organisers and facilitators to develop the Australasian report card and review the SOTP process and summit methodology. The workshop will probably be run by Dr Jess Dart, the participatory evaluation specialist who developed the SOTP methodology. Expenses will be paid by IAP2A.

This location and date has been chosen to coincide with a conference on deliberative democracy that will feature some of the world's leading theorists and practitioners.

³ CAE (Continuing Adult Education) in Victoria provided the venue free of charge for the pilot summit.

Communications and marketing

The Practice Committee will develop a communications plan that will consider:

- Regular project updates
- Communications with SOTP project participant
- Target audiences including politicians, senior officials, CEOs and senior managers, academics, media and NGOs
- Opportunities to present about the SOTP project at conferences
- Opportunities to write articles that could be placed in professional journals, etc (e.g. planning, policy, the IAP2 Journal)

IAP2A has an ‘antiquated’ and ‘difficult to update’ website. While information about the SOTP project will be added to the website, a Wordpress webpage will be created for the project with links between the 2 sites. This will help IAP2A experiment with a social media approach.

IAP2A will purchase (easy to use) video cameras that will enable video footage from regional summits to be uploaded to the web. The experience of the Victorian summit suggests that post-summit interviews with participants can be very engaging. A limited number of people including regional organisers and facilitators will be able to upload material to the Wordpress site. Regional Coordinators will be responsible to the video cameras, which can be used for any IAP2A event.

The content of this page has yet to be worked out but will include information about the purpose of the project and its methodology, video and photos from summits, updates on progress, reports, and IAP2A’s response to recommendations. The Wordpress site could also include information about the Leadership Breakfast programme.

Timeframes

Regional Report Cards

Time-frame	Lead	Tasks	Comment
Jul 10	PC	Develop a communications plan including a Wordpress site	• Post pilot SOTP report, video
Early Jul 10	PC	PC brief RCs about project	• Series of 1-1 calls and/or teleconferences/Skype calls
Early-mid Jul 10	PC	RC help identify and recruit: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Regional organisers • Regional facilitators 	• RCs to approach potential candidates • [or shall we advertise in an e-communication to our members]
Jul or Aug 10	PC	PC to obtain proposal for Scribe/Analyst/Writer role. IAP2A office to finalise contract	• Someone with appropriate experience of methodology and of preparing report cards.
Late Jul or early Aug 10	PC Pres	Project briefing and training for regional organisers and facilitators	• PC to set time and date with participants • Off to arrange access to webinar technology
Jul to end of project	PC KG	Project management/mentoring	
Early Aug 10, open for 3 weeks	PC	Data collection via Australasian survey	• PC to find a Volunteer to administer survey • PC and Volunteer to review survey used for pilot • Regional data sent to appropriate ROs/RFs
Aug 10	RO RF	Set dates for regional summits	• Each regional summit to be held on different days so Writer can attend

Aug – early Sep 10	RO RF Off	Summit venues and catering	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • RO/RF to identify venue, Off to book • RC/RO/RF to attempt to find sponsorship for venue and catering
Sep-Oct 10	PC Off RO RF	Summit recruitment and registration	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Invitation from President emailed to members, • Off to administer registration • RO/RF to identify and approach/invite non-members
Sep-Oct 10	RO RF	Regional data collection, review, collation for presentation at summits	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Volunteer to help identify, collect, review collate data for summits
	IAP2A office	Purchase and post video cameras	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Flip mino video, c.\$250⁴, footage can be uploaded directly from Mino to You-tube
Nov/Dec 10	RO RF	Hold regional summits	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • RF to facilitate, Writer to scribe • Each regional summit to be held on different days so Writer can attend
Late Nov, early Dec 10	RO RF Writer	Draft regional report cards	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Writer to analyse and prepare draft using pilot template • Review by RO, RF, Volunteer, PC • Review by participants
February 2011	RO RF	Final regional report cards	Published on project website

Australasian Report Card

Time-frame	Lead	Tasks	Comment
Jul-Aug 10 (at same time Writer)	PC	PC to obtain proposal participatory evaluation specialist to run workshop to develop the Australasian report card. IAP2A office to finalise contract	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Probably Jess Dart, Clear Horizon
Early 2011	PC Dart	Workshop to produce Australasia report card and review process	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Off identify and book venue, and catering. Find sponsorship if possible • Travel & accommodation for 5 ROs & 5 RFs, plus Pres & PC
Mar 11	PC Dart	Write Australasian report	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Drafts to be reviewed by PC, ROs, CFs
Apr 11	Off	Publishing and dissemination	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Design (Real estimate) • Printing 1000 copies (Real estimate) • Post (Guesstimate)
		Sub-Total	

Legend: Pres=IAP2A President; PC=Practice Committee; RC=IAP2A Regional Coordinator; Off=IAP2 office; Wr=Scribe/Analyst/Writer; RO=Regional Organiser; RF=Regional Facilitator; Vol=Regional volunteers; KG=Keith Greaves

⁴ <http://www.theflip.com/en-us/Products/mino.aspx>