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AUSTRALASIA

PAINTING THE LANDSCAPE

A CROSS - CULTURAL EXPLORATION OF
PUBLIC - GOVERNMENT DECISION MAKING

1. AUSTRALASIA

Prepared by
Lyn Carson, Ph.D.
Regional Coordinator

Background

This report covers the Australasian region (Australia and New Zealand), two countries in Oceania that were colonised at roughly the same time (late 18th, early 19th centuries) by Britain and came close to being part of the same federation in 1901. New Zealand has one-fifth (roughly four million) the population of Australia (roughly 20 million). Both remain constitutional monarchies (with very loose connections to the distant crown). People from Anglo-Celtic cultures dominate decision making in both countries and both countries have diverse migrant populations, especially since the mid-20th century. New Zealand's Indigenous population, the Maoris, makes up 13 percent of the population and share power more equitably than is evident in Australia. The Indigenous/Aboriginal population of Australia represents slightly more than two percent of the population and is notoriously disadvantaged, not having been supported by a strong treaty as Maoris have through the Treaty of Waitangi. There has been a considerable shift in both countries toward public participation (P2), most noticeably since 1999 when experiments in public deliberation occurred. Interest in these innovations is growing, with Western Australia (WA) leading the way (see Carson and Hart 2005 and Carson and Hart forthcoming).

Process Report

Implications of choosing this particular set of interviewees

There were three interviewers and 10 interviewees. From New Zealand (NZ), there were two national administrators and two public participation (P2) practitioners. From Australia (Aus), two state government elected representatives, two state government administrators, one local government elected representative and one local government administrator. All were known personally to the regional coordinator except the two WA interviewees who were known to the interviewer.

There was tremendous consistency across the interviews in terms of questions asked; each interviewer diligently covered all questions and when they deviated from the precise question it was evident that they covered the required territory. The transcripts reveal good rapport between interviewers and interviewees.

The interviewees represented a good spread across the decision making landscape of Australasia. Because they were known to the interviewers they were inevitably people with a high level of awareness of, and experience with, P2; their knowledge of experimentation with new forms of P2 varied only a little.

How might results have differed if another group had been selected?

Had we chosen randomly from the same groupings (elected representatives, administrators and P2 practitioners) we would probably have uncovered much more dependence on traditional forms of P2 than we did. However, those that were interviewed were able to make observations about more widespread use of less innovative methods. Had we chosen at random there may have been less ease with the interviewers. At times it was also obvious that interviewees were slightly defensive or apologetic if they were not living up to the P2 'standards' that they associated with those doing the interviewing.

What surprises were there?

The willingness to be interviewed was a delight. Perhaps this should not have been a surprise but it was satisfying to detect enthusiasm for P2 from amongst those for whom it is not a primary pursuit. It was surprising how well most were able to reflect on their own practice of P2. They might not have been sharing the same language as their interviewers but their responses were thoughtful and well considered.

Taken as a whole it is impossible not to be impressed by the types and number of innovative P2 methods that are occurring in Australasia: citizens' juries, large-scale dialogues, world cafes, large-scale resident feedback registers, web-based interactivity, community cabinets, ministerial regional community forums, design charrettes and more. Also, of note is the awareness of flaws in existing systems of government (local, state and national) and weaknesses in traditional forms of P2: surveys, public meetings, advisory committees and so on. The interviewees as a whole were critically reflective individuals.

What did not go according to plan?

The interviews mostly proceeded according to the original plan. IAP2 insisted on more New Zealanders than seemed appropriate because of the population spread. Two New Zealanders to eight Australians was the original intention (given NZ population is one-fifth of Australia's) but a request for more New Zealanders was satisfied. This meant that all national government participants were from NZ and all P2 practitioners were from NZ. All who were invited to participate accepted the invitation.

There were inconsistencies in the way the interviewers prepared their one-page summaries. The regional coordinator tried to overcome this by adding additional comments. Presumably this happened in other regions as well.

Comprehensive Report

Recurring themes

A number of themes recurred:

Timing of P2 is important—preferably at the beginning when options are being considered, not just at the end.

Some sections of government are better at P2 than others; engineers and accountants are hopeless, community service staff members are terrific, natural resource managers are good, planners are getting better.

There is a weak link between P2 and decision-making influence. Also a difference between the value placed on P2 by communities relative to decision makers.

There are structural barriers: cost of P2 for decision makers, cost to participants (e.g. wages foregone, childcare), difficulties arising from work/family balance (people are increasingly time poor and changing labour market policies are not helping).

Generally P2 is improving.

It is difficult to attract a microcosm of the population. Everyone wants to avoid “squeaky wheels” and the most educated (in Carson and Martin’s terms “the incensed and the articulate”). Everyone wanted to ensure that marginalised voices are heard.

Consultation or *community engagement* were the two most preferred terms, not *public participation*.

Language of *management*, including *risk management* is pervasive in government circles and there is a rampant desire observed among policy makers to *defuse*, *crush* or *manage* controversy.

Similarities

Consultation *fatigue* is evident especially among some marginalised communities who are repeatedly consulted and now see little benefit in participating since there is no clear link between P2 and influencing decision.

A number of people noted the need for building capability—amongst administrators, elected representatives and community members. Many of the interviewees were already attending to this.

Many expressed displeasure at the democratic deficit, at grand-standing politicians who were impeding effective P2 because they did not understand it or because they wanted to claim credit for events.

Informed citizens were needed for P2, not just knee-jerk expressions of opinion.

Differences

WA is stark in its use of innovative forms of P2. It is also the only place where a major international conference was convened that helped lift the standard of P2 practice.

One former WA elected official is also the only one to offer a concrete example of a cost/benefit analysis which indicated the real financial benefit of P2.

Despite the weak link between P2 and influence, there were a number of impressive examples of real influence occurring as a consequence of P2.

Evaluation was poorly considered and badly done. The exceptions were the two P2 practitioners. However, some administrators reported their awareness of high levels of satisfaction among P2 participants when P2 was done well, along with an absence of protest.

Local government is more amenable to P2 than national or state government (although WA provided a clear example of one state government portfolio that was exceptional).

Other observations

Sandy Heierbacher from National Coalition for Dialogue and Deliberation (NCDD) developed a framework that might be useful here. She categorizes P2 that would be found typically on the far side of IAP2's spectrum as follows:

Dialogue and deliberation stream	Intention or purpose	Some appropriate methods
Exploration	To encourage people and groups to learn more about themselves, their community, or an issue, and possibly discover innovative solutions	Bohmian Dialogue, World Café, Conversations Café, Council process, Open Space
Conflict transformation	To resolve conflicts, to foster personal healing and growth, and to improve relations among groups	Sustained Dialogue, Victim-Offender Mediation, Public Conversations Project dialogues, Web Lab's Small Group Dialogue
Decision Making	To influence decisions and policy, and to improve public knowledge	National Issues Forums, Citizens Juries, Deliberative Polling, 21 st Century Town Meeting, Citizen Choicework, Consensus Conference

Collaborative Action	To empower and groups to solve complicated problems and take responsibility for the solution	Study Search, Inquiry	Circles, Appreciative	Future
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Interviewees often mentioned *exploration* or *transforming conflict* but seemed to lack effective methods to deal with either; they were more comfortable when speaking about the *decision making* realm (with considerable awareness about appropriate methods). One or two interviewees mentioned *collaborative action*. Some talked about *risk management*, an area that is not so well covered by Heierbacher’s table (above) though there is overlap with *conflict transformation*. *Risk management* can occur prior to any conflict arising and is usually a solo activity by government. So, too, is *verification* or *seeking feedback* to see if a government approach is acceptable. (The left-hand side of IAP2’s spectrum can accommodate this.) Also not mentioned in the table is a legislative (or statutory or regulatory) *requirement* to do P2—which often meant, for interviewees, going through the motions with little enthusiasm for genuine public involvement.

These interviews confirmed the importance of enabling leaders—either by setting an example to others, insisting that P2 occurs, building P2 into policy guidelines or regulations or modeling P2 practice by participating oneself.

Findings

Participants of this research were sourced from various organizations and positions in Australasia including State Administrators, State elected officials, Local Administrator, and Local elected official from Australia and Federal Administrators and Public participation practitioners from New Zealand.

Research Question 1

What is the nature of public participation/deliberation in government decision-making processes across different cultures?

While comparably low in population density when compared to other countries (21 million in Australia in 2006¹ and 4.3 million in New Zealand in 2009²), a majority of the

¹ 2007. Australia Census.

[http://www.ausstats.abs.gov.au/ausstats/subscriber.nsf/0/720767F97001A093CA25747100121A3F/\\$File/31010_dec%202007.pdf](http://www.ausstats.abs.gov.au/ausstats/subscriber.nsf/0/720767F97001A093CA25747100121A3F/$File/31010_dec%202007.pdf). Accessed September 30, 2009

² 2009. Statistics New Zealand. <http://www.stats.govt.nz/>. Accessed September 30, 2009

populations in both Australia and New Zealand reside in coastal areas. As a result, geography has led to a concentration of population in urban areas.

Two overall themes emerged in Australian and New Zealand interviews. First, the implications of such population clustering in Australia, according to one local elected Australian official, seem to encourage an individualist mentality that some seek to overcome in urbanized settings:

...we are reasonably densely populated for Australia. Our municipality is one of the more densely populated in the country, and we've got to learn to live together. But my impression of the Australian psyche is that it actually finds it incredibly difficult to live at close quarters with people. The Australian way is to walk away, and sort of this kind of bushranger mentality of like, "I'm riding out there in the big..."

This individual later added, "I mean 90 percent of the Australian population is urbanized and always has been. But there's this head space which thinks that I'm riding out in the ranges." While New Zealand is 75% smaller in terms of population density, New Zealand interviews also suggest a tendency towards balancing individuality with the collective best interest.

Second, Australian and New Zealand interviews placed emphasis on consulting Maori and Australian aboriginal people. This perspective reflects the larger historic and cultural context of both countries in recent years, following recent court rulings and laws that seek to protect native heritage and rights.

Context of Public Participation

Need for political systems to adapt

The political systems in both Australia and New Zealand are structured based on a parliamentary or Westminster-style government. Interviewees explained how these systems create and support opportunities for involvement from the public.

In terms of participation from below, I don't think we ever should underestimate the ability of people to get together when they feel the need. Public meetings on issues of local concern are always well attended if it's a matter of passionate interests. The local members of Parliament are available in their electorate offices. (Australian state elected official)

However, this official also noted that sometimes in Australia, people must work from outside government to focus attention on issues requiring attention. "In our society there are definitely structural forces at work, which are pushing people into their private space. I think, obviously, the media, consumption, the idea that, the way you live is to consume things rather than to do things, the idea that you receive information rather than make information, through your own actions. There are structural forces at work wanting that to happen more and more. Some of those structural forces are quite commercial, the more you can capture people, the more they can consume, the more

you can get," this person said. In other instances, government policies and programs may impede participation, and these effects should be considered:

On the other side of the equation, there are forces at work, which, are leading people to protest, to become part of the community, and whatever. I think governments need to think about the implications of their policies for participation. For example, is the labor market structured so that families find it difficult to organize participation in their local Parents and Citizens, in their local sporting groups? Are work patterns making it difficult for people to have involvement? That's just one example....I think the labor market policies are important in their impact on participation. So, I think, yes, there are structural issues at work, there are commercial issues at work, and I think governments should develop policies to counter those, so, that, when they're thinking about something, they think about the impact on participation. And I think there are certain government initiatives that could be taken there to assist, either direct initiatives or indirect by having policies that do actually give space for public participation. (Australian state elected official)

Such effects are also evident in New Zealand on the political level, given the coalition or multi-party government that has been in place since the 1990s. Political pressures in such an environment may result in more emphasis on participatory and deliberative approaches, as a New Zealand federal administrator explained. There is also an increased level of political sophistication that is evident, and that local elected officials must grapple with:

And there is this difficulty about this thing about you always follow the community, like when this was started in [community name] about 20 years ago, people like [name] and those who really started it. Their view was that you always went with the community, right? If the community wanted it, you always went with it. But then of course, the question is, I mean maybe things were simpler back then, I don't know, I wasn't a Councillor then, but things are just not that simple. I mean, for instance, when John comes up with his survey and says, well 60 percent of the 250 people we surveyed down around [community name] said they want a park, you should give them park. (Australian local elected official)

Political structures impose limitations for officials

The structure of government in Australia dictates the roles that officials play and limits local power. A local Australian elected official explained how his local government area "comprises a number of suburbs and it has responsibilities for a number of services derived mainly from federal and state legislation. Local government is not recognized in the Australian constitution, so it does not have any law-making powers of its own."

This interviewee also reflected how the nature of public participation and deliberation has changed in recent years at the local level. He began by describing the former Council chambers in his town, and how the room itself reflected the relationship that existed between the Council and its public.

In terms of the history of participation, [community name] Council was a leader in terms of opening up the council to the community. There is a picture actually in the council chambers, and we are still in the old council chambers, we haven't built a new one, so it's still the old Victorian one. There is a photograph of the council chambers as it used to look like, and there was a barrier across between the councilors and the members of the public, and you were not allowed to speak at the council meeting and so on -- so that was in the 80s.

Also in that time, the council was very much a working-class area. Although you had a group of people who were middle-class people, university-educated people who came in under the Whitlam free education era, which lasted for five years or something, not very long! And they started to come in and buy up houses because they were cheap. Nobody wanted to live in the area. It was polluted, it was awful. People would not admit to living in [community name] 30 years ago because it was a stigma. But some of those people started to move in and they started the [community name] Association, the [community name] Association, the [community name] Association, and so on, to protect the environment, to have a say. So it is very much community-led with a couple of champions who were elected to Council. The old Council was, in a sense, you could almost call it a Tammany Hall type of council, it was absolutely owned and run by the Labor Party, which as you probably know or may not know, started in [community name] in the [name] Hotel. They had their first parliamentary meetings in Melbourne, but they actually first started in that area.

So that is their crucible, if you like, a very old working-class area. They ran the council, so if you read [book author and name that relates locally], [community name] features very strongly in that, the connections there of how they organized themselves politically. They organized themselves politically in a very closed shop kind of power way. Because that is what they felt was what they needed to do at the time. But of course, anything like that can become corrupted, which it did. So this was a new wave of opening everything up again. So then the times changed and the new legislation said yes, it should be more open and transparent and accountable and all the rest of it. So we have got a lot of that in there.

Now we consult on a lot of things. But we are finding, too, that the way things are put together, everything is so technical now and the jargon is so obscure, and the processes are so fixed, that it can be very difficult for people to actually be consulted. And then even if they are consulted and spend all this time, what does it mean? If they are consulted for a plan, which is the cultural plan, and then nothing is put in the budget to do any of this stuff, well, hey, what does it mean?

The new legislation, the councilors are like the board of directors -- they don't have any power over the staff in terms of rolling out their work or hiring and firing them. That is the general manager's responsibility. So our capacity to make things happen is in our contract and performance agreement with the general

manager. Most of the people in the community have no idea really what their local council does. They may know what they want... and it depends on what you... It is fascinating.

Engagement that supports risk assessment

Several Australasian interviewees placed a pragmatic value on the use of public participation and deliberative approaches as a means for “risk assessment by the public” on important or complex issues that are emerging (Australian state elected official).

“We do have legal requirements to consult with counsels if we are doing work,” said one Australian state administrator. “But we do ourselves initiate the consultation with the public on projects. It is not strictly a legal requirement, but if we are trying to get approval we need to get it through either the [agency] or [agency] and we need the government to agree [cross-talking]. The environmental protection agencies, the planning agencies, and we need government support to be forthcoming in terms of financial input. So you can be assured that unless we get a reasonable level of support, we are going to have trouble getting projects agreed.”

This same official acknowledged the government and community expectations that accompany policymaking in the Australian context. According to this interviewee, a proposed project or policy “has to fulfill a couple of tests” in order to be successful.

“One is it is written down, the public policy. Then secondly, that it has been through some form of consultation exercise with the community,” this official said. “And thirdly, that it is adopted by someone to give it some status. The key part of it is the fact that that section had some community hearing.”

Moreover, “I think similarly to that is the rise in civic society insisting that they should be more closely involved and have better information about decision making - generally by bureaucracies, and I guess by big companies also.” In addition to expectations for involvement by the public, this official noted “almost overwhelming” interest in the subject area within which she works, particularly as her organization seeks to undertake several impending major changes in policy.

Public's expectations vs. those of agencies, administrators

Other interviewees revealed that the public's expectations for participatory governance vary demonstrably with agency or administrative expectations. “I'm not sure if they know, frankly,” said a New Zealand federal administrator. “Partially, because, as I said towards the beginning, that, this is a very new initiative for government, so, this transition, or this move or this exchange of terms between consultation and dialogue and what that actually might, the implications of that might be, people really haven't got their heads around. So, I think that's a very open question, the expectations of it.”

By contrast, an Australian state administrator with experience in public participation and consultation said, “...my expectation is that the community will become consulted at

every possible opportunity while you are preparing plans and policies. However, at some point, we have to make decisions, so there is a point at which disengagement has to occur, and then the decision-making process has to come into play.”

Another Australian state administrator commented, “Well, we do want to achieve the outcome that we set out to do. For example, when we are looking at particular expansion projects we may, for example, be very interested in making sure that they are put in place because we have analyzed the need and realized that we would not be fulfilling our legislative responsibilities to facilitate [indiscernible] but it did not happen.”

This same individual later added, “So often, it is that whole process of addressing the particular concerns. But at the same time, I do think the public wants people to show leadership about the things that are important. They are not wanting you to go out and say, “Look, we want to know whether or not we should build [type of facility],” because they know our role is to provide for [type of facility]. But we need to go out and demonstrate why that is important, what the options are, and where they can have meaningful input.”

Appeal of alternative models

There also was a realization that, despite best efforts, “there are signs that...the models that we’ve been running are no longer, or seem to be coming under a lot of stress.” As a result, exploring alternative models for participation used in countries such as Australia, Canada, United States, Europe and elsewhere in New Zealand could be beneficial (New Zealand federal administrator). Another interviewee noted the success of participatory budgeting in Brazil, and wondered out loud if such a model could be successfully applied in Australia. However, the limited role that the public might play was affirmatively noted:

It will base it partly on its understanding of what the public thinks are the priorities, the necessary priorities. It may have some advice from consultation with the community about an emerging issue that it needs to give some attention to in terms of budget expenditure. But I think the budget is one area where you’d have to say it’s pretty well a high level executive decision. (Australian state elected official)

Research Question 2

How do different cultures support or provide space for public participation/deliberation in government decision-making processes?

The country profiles that are highlighted in this section of the report note the process-based components of public participation/deliberation, including common terms, definitions and conceptual understandings; identify who is included and excluded and how access is made possible for such processes; and detail the practices that support or encourage the role of the public in decision-making processes.

Public participation design framework

This part of our research focused on how public participation is defined and the corresponding design framework

How is public participation/deliberation defined?

Public participation and deliberation processes in Australia and New Zealand reflect values of accountability, transparency, consultation, community development and service. Interviews with New Zealand based public participation practitioners and federal administrators placed an emphasis on advocacy as an underlying value in public participation processes. Advocacy was described by these interviewees as ensuring true representation of minority populations and indigenous communities in decision making.

Interviewees described four types or categories of public participation processes:

Feedback and Consultation – A state administrative official from Australia described public participation as a process where “the government has got some proposals in mind and they are basically trying to get feedback about what the community thinks about those initiatives and proposals.” This was a common characterization of Australia public participation practices, specifically in regards to those processes led by the state. Emphasizing consultation and transparency in governmental decision making, a second Australian interviewee noted, “What we found to be particularly important is to be able to demonstrate later how we have taken on board what they have said...its not so much reviews of decisions as helping them to understand the input that they had given and what was done in response, so that they can be quite supportive next time we ask them” (state administrator).

“People genuinely want to check whether the answers they’ve been beavering away on as a policy group or as a government agency are right, and whether they’re going to work for the people who are being served,” said a private public participation practitioner, highlighting a foundation of service in New Zealand’s public participation practices.

Access to Decision-Makers – “What one will be trying to do is to get the public to provide a view as to what is important to them so one could take into account in decision-making,” said one Australian state official. Interviewees described public participation practices that create opportunities for citizens and communities to access decision makers at a local, state and national level. According to statements from one state administrator, governmental agencies in Australia have witnessed a growing support for public participation practices that not only provide access to decision makers but provide citizens with the opportunity to “actively engage” in policy development.

Community Organizing and Advocacy –In New Zealand, interviewees with a federal administrator characterized public participation as based on a “fundamental view” of advocacy, specifically in regards to indigenous and marginalized populations. “If we are to advocate for the interests of [interest group], we really need to know what are the issues most concerning [interest group]”. Further, “what we want to know is whether

what the research is telling us is actually reflected in the lives and the lived experience of New Zealand [interest group].” Australian officials also described an emphasis on ‘grassroots’ or community based public participation practices. As one state elected official described “I’d call this involvement that comes from below...seeking the advice of its citizens”. Locally officials also emphasized community capacity building as a means of ensuring participation in local policy decisions. As one locally elected official described, local governments support community members by “giving them reduced fees or access to information, or if they come along and say, ‘hey we are trying to get this together, can you give us some help’...Council gets the idea that they should be supporting this rather than thinking oh well, they’re doing that over there and it’s got nothing to do with us”.

Program Efficiency – “You can get much better enhanced decision-making, better use of resources, you’re more likely to have community involvement in your councils” said one Australian state administrator, again emphasizing a commitment to service reflected in public participation practices. This same official noted, “After all, the reason a Council exists is to provide services to its community and unless it talks to its community about the effectiveness of those services, how well targeted they are, how effective they are in meeting the community needs, then we just go on providing those services by rote from year to year.”

Concept of Public Participation

The concept of public participation was broadly defined by an elected state official as:

“individuals participating in the community through their regular votes, for local government, state government, federal government, through their participation in local community organizations on the basis of a shared interest with someone else, a shared religion, a shared culture, or it may be that there’s a specific issue that emerges that they’re interested in and they become a part of the process of involvement.”

Other definitions of public participation centered on the following concepts:

Active Decision Making – “I think public participation for me is anyone in the community who participates in decision making” said one state administrator. Public participation was described by one state administrator as a “two-way exchange where people are engaging and sharing...listening to the voices of the community”. A second state official noted that in Australia, “people are seeking a more active engagement” in decision making. In order to accommodate this, governmental agencies are expanding the concept of public participation, actively incorporating community input and feedback in a “much more deliberative way.” (Australian state administrator)

Consultation – One interviewee conceptualized public participation as “trying to get feedback about what the community thinks”. This concept is often referred to as ‘consultation’ in Australia public participation practices. As one state elected official described “there are also a range of community consultation processes, and I use the

term 'consultation' because the government has got some proposals in mind and they are basically trying to get feedback about what the community thinks about those initiatives and proposals" (Australia state elected). A second state administrator provided an alternative interpretation of this concept of consultation in public participation practices. "Sometimes people do tend to look at public participation as trying to convince the public to take a particular course. I think they are gradually tending to interpret it more to getting the public's views. But there are times, even with public participation, because at times one is really trying to convince the public to do things."

Advocacy and Collaboration – New Zealand interviews specifically placed a strong emphasis on relationship-building and collaboration with both Maori and immigrant populations. This concept of public participation reflects a larger government commitment and mandate to actively protect native rights while ensuring true representation. Several New Zealand interviewees, including both practitioners and federal administrators, described the concept of public participation as intrinsically linked to an "advocacy role". Public participation was described as processes that engage residents and represent the true "voices of Maori people" in policymaking. As one federal administrator described, public participation creates an opportunity for minority groups and less traditional participants "to engage on issues that they may have only normally asked to voice an opinion without having the context and the time to discuss".

Public Dialogue and Education – Interviews placed an emphasis on dialogue and education as fundamental values of public participation practices. Public participation promotes communication and dialogue between the public and governmental agencies and administrations. In New Zealand, this concept describes processes that engage residents and stakeholder groups in constructive dialogue "rather than stating a position or trying to win an argument" (New Zealand federal administrator). According to this same official, public participation is "literally, a roundtable, issues are put on the table and then people break off into small groups depending on what issues they're interested in, and then those small groups enter into dialogue".

Common Terms

Interviewees in both Australia and New Zealand acknowledged that the term public participation was not commonly used to describe participatory practices or deliberative processes. In Australia, the most common term for public participation was 'public consultation', although interviewees did reveal that the interpretation or public support for the concept of consultation was shifting. According to one local elected official, in recent years communities have come to interpret the term consultation to refer to public participation processes where governmental agencies look to the community to confirm decisions rather than actively seeking public input in decision-making. "So that has got a pretty, a reasonably bad name, 'community consultation,' because you are not really seriously asking people what they want. You might tinker around the edges, but essentially, okay, we've got to consult with the community because we are required by legislation, we know what we want to do so we are going to go out and listen to them".

Similar reactions to the term 'consultation' were recorded in interviews with several public participation practitioners in New Zealand. As one interviewee described, public participation is more commonly referred to as 'community engagement' as opposed to consultation. "We used the words 'community consultation' a lot in the early and late 1990s. But towards the last three years, the words 'community engagement' has come in because people are sick and tired of being consulted...They don't really see their voices being reflected in whatever policies or strategies that government agencies came up with".

Other common terms included community involvement, community engagement, and active decision making. "Public Participation is really never used in New Zealand...Public consultation is the popular parlance for the kinds of things that we'd talk about in the field", said a New Zealand public participation practitioner. "There's emerging conversations in terms of community engagement, although that often gets confused a bit with community development programs..."

In New Zealand, federal administrators and practitioners expressed a preference for the term 'community engagement' as opposed to consultation. As one practitioner described, "we talk about community input or community voices into governmental policies." Australian interviewees revealed a similar preference, "I think 'engagement' does capture it better in the sense that you are coming here to engage with the Premier or cabinet ministers around an issue that is important" said one state elected official.

Types of Public Participation/Deliberative Processes

Interviewees detailed the design or framework for public participation processes that were used to engage citizens.

New Zealand

Dialogue Events. In New Zealand, federal administrative officials explained that public participation at the federal level is often designed and implemented in the form of "dialogue events". As one federal administrator described, "These dialogue events were run over the course of a day, or the equivalent number of hours during the evening, late afternoon and evening." Events are often led by contracted facilitators, and are typically designed in a way that creates informal opportunities for interest groups and governmental agencies to come together around specific topics. "We've tried to establish regular mechanisms for interest groups to be able to raise their issues with us and communicate with use so that it's more of a conversation rather than just a kind of formal process", said one federal administrator. Interviewees expressed a "strong desire to be regularly seeking the views of New Zealand [interest group] on the issues that are important to them so that we can fulfill that advocacy role" (federal administrator).

In New Zealand, dialogue events tend to focus on "cultural, ethical and spiritual dimensions". Given the unique and philosophical focus, there is rarely a "prescriptive agenda", said one federal administrator. The same official explained, "We're not looking to come out with some sort of consensus, unless it just happens to emerge in the

course of the day, and what we're actively trying to encourage is for people to listen to other people's perspectives and values and points of view, and have the opportunity to express those". Conversations focus on specific discussion points or topic areas, working with the community to invite representatives from specific New Zealand interest groups (such as the Maori) and unrepresented populations. "We've had two topics we've undertaken up to, I think now we're up to a total of 40-odd dialogue events now, 32 of those have been run over a day and then eight of them were run over two days with two weeks between each day" said one federal administrator.

Other less formal structures for public participation include public surveys, informational seminars, online resources and other methods of communication technology.

Large Scale Planning or Assessment Projects. Large scale planning or assessment projects in New Zealand follow a more structured approach where a targeted group of residents are encouraged to participate in small "one-off events" scheduled at major project milestones. Although dependent upon the nature of the project, these "one-off" public events typically gather input and information from a targeted group of community members, and then return at the project's closing to present on the results. At times, "projects will involve about 16 different meetings in 16 different locations. Other projects we only have three meetings – one in Auckland, one in Christchurch, and one in Wellington" explained one New Zealand public participation practitioner.

Citizens Juries or Community Panels. Local governments may also engage with a random selection of residents and community interest group members through a citizens jury or community panel. According to one federal administrator with experience in the implementation of these deliberative practices, "local governments have really tried to have a far greater level of participation in their decision-making processes...they seem to be a little more adventurous than central government in terms of using different processes".

Despite this strong support for public participation and advocacy at the state and local level, New Zealand officials expressed a frustration with the support for and implementation of deliberative processes at the national level.

"It's almost impossible to find anything that is really pushing hard for public participation. There are, we have referenda and things like that, which I think are at a different level completely, but at the national level its almost been put a little bit into the too-hard basket, which is quite interesting because we've had quite a lot of interest from other agencies in our website, and how it's working, and how it's feeding into our kind of advocacy role and our policy role." (New Zealand federal administrator)

Australia

In Australia, public participation processes varied across governmental agencies and interviewees.

Online Consultations. At the local or municipal level, public participation and deliberative processes are often implemented in the form of online consultations. As one local Australian elected official explained, these online consultations are typically implemented when local governments are looking for community input on major policy developments.

Interviews with several state elected officials explained that governmental agencies typically rely on online consultation and/or public workshops to engage citizens in the development of new legislation. According to these interviews, state ministers “organize a series of public meetings around the state in all of the major centres along the coast and inland”. These public meetings would be organized around a specific topic or policy decisions and would be advertised in local media outlets to ensure representation from the broad public as well as specific stakeholder groups or citizens “interested in that particular topic” (Australian state elected official). The meeting format varies across topic areas and geographic regions and can range from a 2 hour meeting with targeted stakeholders to a full day workshop. As one state official described “it just depends on the contents of the material”.

Online consultation is also commonly used at the state level to invite input on new legislation or policy development. As one elected official in Queensland describes, “We have got online consultation, so what is called Queensland Consult, and you can just get on the web and look at that yourself, and you can see that every program that involved any kind of consultation is there on this website and it gives you an explanation as to what it is, what is being proposed, and it enables you to actually respond online, and you can see what other people have said about it and it breaks it down by topic”.

Less formal structures are also used and implemented on the state and local level to encourage public participation. One municipal level administrator emphasized close coordination with media outlets to create public information campaigns and weekly newsletters. According to this interviewee, “We have bi- monthly newsletters, which go out to all of the community, and, in that, we try to advise the community about some initiatives being taken, and sometimes how they can get involved in those sorts of programs.”

Community Cabinet Meetings, Public Workshops and Community Liaison Groups. At the state level there are a variety of formalized public participation processes designed to broadly engage community representatives and residents including community cabinet meetings, public workshops and community liaison groups.

Community cabinet meetings encourage community/residents to engage with decision makers on a wide variety of topics. According to one state elected official, these meetings are publicized through an “open invitation” broadly distributed to citizens within a specific geographic area. “People can book a delegation, an interview with a specific minister” explained a second Australian state elected official. Residents that commonly participate in these cabinet meetings tend to “come along out of interest”, said one state official.

This official also noted that sometimes “with the community cabinet meetings, you can have 300 or 400 people involved, and some of them will never have had any contact with government in this way before.” Community residents are encouraged to select a preferred minister and spend the allocated amount of time asking questions (Australian state elected official). Interviewees detailed the format and structure of this public participation mechanism.

The state also engages with community representatives and regional stakeholders through community liaison groups or community forums. These formalized community groups are designed to encourage “community-based individuals that are well networked into the community” to participate in regular dialogue events with local decision makers. According to state officials, community forums “consists of a group of community, usually representatives of a particular sector...whether it be in the health area, whether it be the environmental capacity, or safety, or agriculture, transport”. In each region, there is a state initiated selection process whereby community representatives nominate themselves to participate in a series of on-going deliberations with state and local decision makers regarding a specific set of topics. The state determines participation through an interview panel, which asks nominees to describe their “previous involvement with the community to make sure that they are not just there with their own hobby-horse, that they are there having had a history of community involvement and commitment and activism so that you know that they got a record of being involved with the community on various boards or various committees, and they’ve got a record of achievement in some way”.

Typically, these community forums or liaison committees meet quarterly. However, “during input to a particular process, we would have relatively frequent meetings leading out to decision-making” said one state administrator. Depending on the nature of the decision or specific planning effort these community advisory groups could meet consistently for two weeks, or gradually over a one month period.

Citizen Panels and Random Selection Processes. Interviewees also acknowledged the use of citizen panels and random selection processes to ensure broad representation from a variety of stakeholders and residents. As one locally elected official described, these citizen panels are typically held over a series of “two-and-a-half days, sort of Friday afternoon, Saturday and Sunday.”

Justifications

Justifications provided for public participation processes and practices included legislative requirements, public expectation, and agency/governmental commitment. Interviewees cited a variety of justifications for public participation processes and practices ranging from legislative requirements to a natural right. Other justifications included public expectations, agency/governmental commitment, program efficiency and relationship building.

According to statements from one New Zealand based public involvement practitioner, public participation processes are encouraged and implemented because there is a “natural justice to engage the public”, specifically when policy decisions or planning projects directly impact communities and residents.

This same public practitioner explained that public participation was often encouraged in New Zealand because governmental agencies and decision makers “have a legal requirement or imperative to do so, particularly in the resource management area”. He went on to say “there is quite strong legislation that says that the public should be consulted”. A second public participation practitioner also highlighted legal requirements as a justification for public participation processes in New Zealand, specifically in regards social services and outreach to indigenous communities. “There is a commitment from governments to engage specific people and to find what can be done to reduce the disparities that currently exist”. This practitioner referenced his experience with New Zealand governmental agencies, stating that most agencies expressed a genuine desire to “check whether their work and thinking is relevant” by implementing or requiring public participation processes throughout decision making.

Representatives from Australia also cited legislative requirements as a justification for public participation processes. “There are prescriptions in various acts as to why and how we should do some consultation,” said one Australia representative with the state administrator’s office. Some state offices have developed a concept known as “alliance contracting” which requires contractors to engage in specific public participation practices within targeted communities. According to a state representative in Western Australia, these contracts create legal obligation for contractors to enter into a “contractual requirement...that they engage in proper consultation under the public administration protocols” during specific planning projects and development efforts. This interviewee explained, “I supposed that would add up to being the equivalent of the legal requirement even if there’s not actually a law gone through the parliament.”

Other justifications included:

Better decisions – “I think the key reason you do consultation is because you get better decisions at the end of the day”, said one Australia state administrator. Public participation practices encourage governmental agencies to proactively engage with communities to discuss priorities, needs, and potential concerns prior to decision making. As one state administrator described, if agencies do not engage with impacted residents through public participation processes they tend to hear from the community “through a means of complaint, rather than in a proactive and positive way...we can end up spending a lot of our time responding to individual complaints”.

Relationship Building and Community Engagement - Public participation practitioners in New Zealand highlighted relationship building as a primary justification for public participation and community engagement. Their experience working directly with indigenous tribes and community groups on specific planning efforts created an opportunity for local decision makers to “establish a different nature of relationship and

decision-making engagement". Public participation efforts in New Zealand were described as having roots in an organizational/political desire to "establish a direct relationship" with interest groups and indigenous populations.

Program/Service Efficiency – Several interviewees described public participation practices as rooted in the belief that active community engagement supports program efficiency and service delivery. A local level administrator described, "after all, the reason a Council exists is to provide services to its community, and unless it talks to its community about the effectiveness of those services, how well targeted they are, how effective they are in meeting the community needs, then we just go on providing those services by rote from year to year".

Community Expectations – "I think the broader community expects to be consulted", said one Australia state administrator. A second administrator noted, "These days it is a community expectation that they will be consulted and engaged in matters of public policy and planning that would affect the way in which they go about their day-to-day lives". While participatory processes vary across administrative levels and governmental agencies, community expectations were commonly referenced as a primary justification for public participation in both Australia and New Zealand. According to one New Zealand practitioner, "There's a track record of consultation and an expectation of consultation in a number of the kind of social areas that's probably grown in particular in the last nine to ten years".

Legitimize and Prioritize Decisions –Public participation processes "seek legitimacy for what, in politics, is called a bold decision", said one Australian state administrator. "There are some areas that governments find a little bit difficult to handle, they know that change is needed, but they don't quite have the confidence to do it so they form some sort of community consultation to seek legitimacy for a tough decision." In order to ensure public support for policies and decisions, it is important to "get the public to provide a view as to what is important to them so one could take into account in decision-making." (Australian state administrator)

How people access participatory processes

Access to public participation and deliberative processes is made possible through several different mechanisms. *[Editor's Note: The categories to which these strategies/techniques have been assigned were made by the project team (and not by interviewees) as one means for organizing what appear to be like activities together.]*

Meetings, Committees and Community Dialogue – Face to Face

In one local community, community forums also are used. "The forum is the 200 people on the list who will be on the list for about two years, and they will be contacted about particular issues," said the locally elected official. These individuals would be contacted by phone and sent information. "Sometimes they will be brought together to have a

more in-depth discussion. So there would be... and they have agreed that they would like to do that, so they have signed up for that."

A local Australian administrator also noted the use of "listening posts" at community events. "We had some very brief questionnaires and some people going around asking people for feedback about what they saw as important in [name] Park as part of this plan of management process. I think we got 265 separate responses, and about 70 of those were happy to leave their name and address and were happy to be more, further involved in the development of issues at the Park."

In New Zealand, there are "dialogue-based engagement processes where you might use a range of facilitation techniques, if you like, to have smaller conversations, such as focus groups and that sort of thing, with targeted and invited members of communities on particular issues. They happen quite frequently, but they don't happen all the time," said a public participation practitioner. These kinds of event also take place in Australia, according to an Australian federal administrator. At these events, similar to "a roundtable, issues are put on the table and then people break off into small groups depending on what issues they're interested in, and then those small groups will enter into dialogue, and so forth and so on."

These events are "standardized in the sense that we ensure that people understand the sort of ground rules of each event. The fact that the basic framework is around the issues of [subject area] in the cultural, ethical, spiritual dimensions, and we provide people with some information before they come to the meetings, which, you know, everybody gets the same information," said the federal administrator. However, while there is "some sort of standardized elements, but there's not, as I said, there's not some sort of rigid agenda that we're working through because part of the whole process, the whole reason for it is actually to engage and get people to sort of try and enter that dialogic process. They understand that, and, actually when really hard, tough issues come up, controversial issues, that there are ways of people from divergent views approaching them without having to bang each other over the head."

An Australian state administrator noted the use for formal advisory bodies:

Under the various acts that we administer, we've also got formal groups and committees that are set up that actually advise the [name of formal body] on the way in which [subject area] management should be handled, in particular [subject area] allocation. We have two formal groups that are being set up in the legislation: One is in the [geographic region] of the state, and the other one is just to the north of [community name]. These two groups are serviced by the department and they consist broadly of community-based people. They are chaired independently and they consist mainly of landowners and local government people from the areas.

Similarly, standing advisory bodies are used in New Zealand. These bodies provide people with "a longer-term stake in the relationship with the agency and [they] are

regularly engaged with over a specific policy or over a specific area of policy," said a New Zealand public participation practitioner.

Formal committees are also used at the Australian state level, as are public workshops. A local Australian elected official described the use of formal policy committees, although noting that the committee has "residents or ratepayers on it, which is unusual. No other council has their formal policy-making committees have got that. Those people self-select. They just come along. So it is very open in that sense."

This interviewee also explained that the committee structure is very flexible:

It can be six people, it can be 30 people. It's completely open, all those policy discussions. I mean, the results of that all have to go to council and be endorsed, or not endorsed or changed, or added to, or whatever. So the full council meeting is the ultimate decision-making body. But the policy development committees can have anybody on it.

A local administrator in another community noted the use of "committees where members of the community are seconded onto the committees, but they're usually seconded by, or through their association with other members of the committee or with people on the Council, Councillors mainly". This interviewee said "So, it's not a very democratic means of selecting who should sit on those committees."

A New Zealand federal administrator highlighted the use of "sort of formal consultation processes where we have encouraged through mainstream advertising and other distribution channels using community agencies and schools, and things like that." In addition, this federal organization conducts surveys on questions involving "parenting, parenting education programs, whether people have accessed programs, whether they would access programs, how they find their parenting information."

Formal public meetings are also used in New Zealand. According to a public participation practitioner, such meetings are "not a huge part of the work that we do, but, as I look at people who run consultation processes around the country it's still something that people do, which is, you know, you hire a hall and you ask the questions and people bowl on up. That's quite typical."

Likewise, an Australian local administrator noted that his/her community traditionally has used "large public meetings. It's had an issue, it'll call a public meeting, people will come to the town hall and there will be table thumping and lots of noise. But, personally, I'm not an advocate of public meetings." However, this interviewee said, "I don't find them very useful. I think you get a handful of noisy empowered people who come to everything and are very dominant in the way they present and you tend to get people who have an ongoing interest in Council and you don't always target, effectively, the people that you're really trying to get to." As a result, this person said, "So, I'm encouraging Council to move away from the public meeting type forums and to try and look at a more constructive and effective way of engaging this community, you know, focus groups, things of that nature, but, depending on the issue." These may include

focus groups and telephone polls. Community cabinet meetings, noted by an Australian state elected official earlier in this report, are another example of formal engagement activity.

Both *Meetings, Committees and Community Dialogue – Face to Face and Community Building and Partnerships*

New Zealand interviewers reported that the relational aspect of engagement work is important. For example, a New Zealand federal agency described having "had partnerships with Pacific groups." Another interviewee, a New Zealand public participation practitioner, noted the use of "individual, specific meetings or sets of meetings where representatives of organizations who would have a stake in relation to the particular policy or question get called in to give feedback or be part of the development process around a particular policy."

At the local level in Australia, they go farther than what is traditionally considered "informal" access. A local elected official detailed how the locality provided rooms at the community center "for having activities and very often, I mean, all of those rooms are booked out all the time, by various people in the community who organize their own they are kind of self-help they just organize their own stuff, which I think is great. And we then support them by giving them reduced fees or access to information, or if they come along and say, "Hey we are trying to get this together, can you give us some help," which is another way we do it. Which I support a lot and talk about a lot, so that Council gets the idea that they should be supporting this rather than thinking oh well, they're doing that over there and it's got nothing to do with us. So there is that kind of consultation."

In addition, "there are campaigns, political campaigns, and again my view is the community runs those. They run it. We provide them with support," said the locally elected official. "So when the [name] Park was being run, I was the mayor at the time, we provided them -- we had a budget for political issues and we provided -- we did all the telephone polling because it was political, and there was an election coming up so we needed to do some polling to find out if this was affecting the local members' votes because that's a leverage in terms of getting the result that we wanted...So Council provided all the expertise and resources so that there was a community vision and we did a big mail out and computer response, and we got a huge response to that." This community also does some informal outreach in area shopping centers.

Trainings, Education and Research

The use of surveys were also noted by both Australian and New Zealand interviewees as examples of a more semi-formal approach to engagement. An Australian state administrator described how his/her agency used "outside agencies to do them on our behalf." An Australian local elected official detailed the use of perception surveys:

We've done our perception surveys, and they give you a certain amount of information. We have done those for a couple of years now. Now we have a community panel which is, say, 200 people who have agreed that every so often, they will get a phone call and they get some stuff given to them and they will be

asked some questions, and they will be asked to read it and give us some feedback, all right?

Information Sharing

A New Zealand federal administrator noted the use of large consultation exercises "where people called a 0800 number and received a consultation pack and they either wrote in, so they provided a written response to the questions we were asking, or did it online. This effort "was probably one of our first sort of pieces of community engagement, consultation, and that was quite successful, which resulted in nearly 4,000 responses".

In New Zealand, a federal organization has embraced an "e-democracy approach" by creating specific websites for consultations, and has had good success with it: "We've got just over 2,500 people registered on that website at the moment, and we're constantly promoting that around our networks in communities to boost the membership." Others in New Zealand report some success with using new technology. "The uses of technology in an innovative way probably have been limited to some work in terms of texting as a process for getting immediate response that's been used, if I think about our clients who work in the area of youth, that's been a particular tool that's been used," said a public participation practitioner. This interviewee noted how one approach lends itself to others:

...there is the use of databases and using technology to keep large panels of people who might be test points for particular issues. So, we work with a set of colleagues who have databases of thousands of New Zealanders who have expressed their general interest in general areas, and then we can use them for targeted comment, using email requests and then logging them onto websites to respond to our questionnaires. It's kind of like having standing groups, really, that's been used.

An Australian federal administrator also noted the prominence of mediated communications for engagement "We run a website, so all our material goes onto our website. So if we've got comments to make about responses to recommendations, they will be posted".

An Australian local elected official noted the use of an "online tracking system, so people can track where their development application, or where any development application is up to. They can send in an e-mail. They can come in and meet with the staff. Although staff are so busy; they'd prefer if they didn't! And they can write in a letter. Or they can just ring up and say, 'I'm objecting to this.' But if they want the staff to actually address the issues that they are concerned about, then they have to give them some idea of what they are, so that'll get addressed in the report." This locality also does "online consultations" for major policy development. "So we put it out for consultation on our website. Although our website, interestingly enough, gets a very low number of hits, which is amazing given the number of people that are computer literate and the number of houses with computers in them."

Another Australian local interviewee -- an administrator -- said how his/her community is also using technology in this way to gauge community feedback:

... we've been having this discussion at management level recently where we have a computerized customer request system so that as these complaints come in they're registered, tracked, and all that sort of thing, responded to. We haven't actually been looking at the statistics that have been coming through about where all the complaints are being, and looking at how we can actually reduce the number of complaints by being a bit more proactive about the service delivery. Rather than waiting for someone to complain that something needs to be fixed, why aren't we out there saying this needs to be fixed, and fixing it, to save people having to complain about it. And, they're thinking, oh, that's a good idea, we haven't thought of that.

Other approaches included production of a television show, an Australian state administrator noted. This program "became the highest-rating show for its time slot and discussing with the panel of experts, discussing from various perspectives the growth of [community name]. On the day, there were over 120 tables and people that gathered....their views and opinions to various questions about preferred issues were fed into a computer system, and those issues were then played back to show where the highest degree of consensus were."

This organization also uses 3D technology for engagement:

One of the things that we have actually used in the case of -- I think people generally will -- what has been developed recently is a very good fly-through technology, which is basically a visualization technique based on geographic information system software. It enables you to fly over an area and you can then put on to the model you are flying over any attributes so you can put on land contours, you can put on buildings, you can put on natural features, you can put on national parks, all that type of information. And many people actually -- many community people actually do not necessarily read maps particularly well.

This interviewee also noted the value for engaging particular audiences as part of a project the agency worked on in Western Australia. "We had to deal a lot with indigenous people and we used three-dimensional plots, computer plots at the time. Visualization was not really allowed by states. It was too expensive," this state administrator said. "But we used visualization techniques using 3D plots to talk to the Aboriginal community about the areas that they were interested in, and the feedback we got was overwhelmingly positive and they regarded that as being a very effective way of consulting with them because two-dimensional maps with dots and lines tend to be produced in western countries do not necessarily mean a lot to some indigenous people. So that particular technique is one example of developing appropriate techniques to deal with the right audience."

While not mediated, information about engagement efforts is also provided by Australian state agencies through local newspapers. "We take out columns. We send out articles," said a state administrator. A local administrator echoed using this

approach, as well as "bi-monthly newsletters, which go out to all of the community, and, in that, we try to advise the community about some initiatives being taken, and sometimes how they can get involved in those sorts of programs."

Community Building and Partnerships

Another approach used was a mapping game, an Australian state administrator said, "in which the people were able to allocate particular types of use - land use, and housing types onto a large-scale map. Each table had to agree on the preferred scenario and then look at how the cities should grow. In doing that, they were basically using stickers which represented a certain number of people and a certain number of jobs and a certain housing types and distributed them around [community name], which had quite a degree of data. And again, we are able to achieve quite a high degree of consensus from that."

Focus groups, citizens' juries and charrettes are also used at the Australian state level. One state administrator described hosting "ongoing community liaison groups which meet quarterly, which have particular interest group membership."

One Australian local elected official described how an approach to engagement that is traditionally formal had been transformed into something less formal at the local level. In this particular community:

There were a couple of councilors who got elected and declared that they were going to have 'open council'. It was when I first arrived in Australia, actually, and I'd moved into that area. You'd hear the council meetings going on at 2:00 or 3:00 in the morning because it was very open! So it was very much this sort of town hall open discussion. Some of the people who started all of that and that culture of open town hall meetings and open discussion are still around, although a lot of them are very old now or they are dying off, so this whole new generation of people have come in.

In Australia, local officials have had success with community panels, which use a randomly selected or self-appointed group of individuals to provide feedback on specific policy discussions or planning topics. Such random selection processes as a means of engaging with targeted groups of residents while inviting broad community input. When engaging local residents on specific planning questions, local governments "are better placed to randomly select people and to seek their advice on whether something is appropriate or inappropriate in terms of their local area", said this state elected representative.

"I think increasingly local governments now, on planning questions, are better placed to randomly select people and to seek their advice on whether something is appropriate or inappropriate in terms of their local area. I think the inequality between those who seek to get involved and do become involved and those who, perhaps, have a more private existence needs to be better, that balance needs to be better reflected in the processes we've set up, and that can be done through a random selection"

A locally elected official also noted the use of this approach. People are randomly selected and the group meets "over, two-and-a-half days, sort of Friday afternoon, Saturday and Sunday." They indicated:

Two-and-a-half days, they'll do a site visit, and they will be briefed by a range of experts. Some of them might be Council staff, some of them won't be. They listen to some submissions from any groups or individuals who want to make some submissions, and they'll have time out. There will be no councilors in the room with them. We can watch the public parts, but they'll have their own private parts, with a facilitator, where they are then worked through the questions they're posed. They work through, given these information or evidence or documentation or input they have been given, and they'll come to some kind of conclusion.

A state elected official referred to a successful example of random selection in Western Australia. "I suppose the most important experiment that we had in Western Australia was to randomly select a couple of thousand citizens from the city of Perth, the metropolitan area, to determine the future direction of the city." This technique brings a broad "cross-section of the community" together "to discuss a wide range of issues", said one state administrator. In one specific case study the state randomly selected 200 people to "provide feedback on what they thought the best future was for that area". According to the interviewee, this broad group represented residents from "various areas that were not just from the local groups, but included a random sample of people from the [region] and [geographic area] and included people who were locally and people who self-nominated, and presented them with information from various groups, including health department, water supply interests, the local community fishing groups, recreation groups, camping groups". A second state official placed emphasis on public participation practices that strive to include a "broad cross-section of the community" in order to prevent "having a few people with strong views perhaps dictating to the rest of the population."

Other

An Australian state administrator noted the balance between structured and unstructured engagement that is sought. Formal processes "have to follow a format because it is important that we get structured information in order to validate it. There is still an allowance made for informal unstructured comment to come through, and they can be recorded as part of the process also. It is very important that they summarize a particular issue that they want to raise. They are given an opportunity to do that, and that one summarized view comes to the fore at a broader group level not just at a table that would only be able to be discussed by a few people."

Similarly, a New Zealand public participation practitioner observed the value of a flexible approach to engagement. In some instances, what is planned is scrapped. For this individual, small meetings are often used, which mainly consist of oral presentations, specifically "discussions, and more oral presentations from the community when they come back and present it. We do use big prints of paper for them to write, but in some instances, we have also used the data projector. We do a Powerpoint presentation. It

depends. Sometimes we go in with a Powerpoint presentation and then we decide as a group that we don't want to look so formal and professional, and decide to do an oral presentation. But it depends on the situation when we arrive."

A mix between different methods is also appreciated indicated a New Zealand public participation practitioner:

if I think about the youth community, Ministry of Youth Development has got a range of youth participation initiatives which are absolutely focused on engaging young people both in the processes of local government and central government, and while they don't have huge spread, they're quite innovative, they're network-based, they're youth council-based in terms of having some representatives locally, and they use a mix of technologies, the web and the text kind of thing, and that nature of language that have that would be more engaging of young people. So that's something that's absolutely being done.

Finally, a comment about how access is made possible from an Australian state administrator that notes the importance of thinking about the needs of the audience and the value of a variety of methods:

Accessibility is very important to make sure we get the right people along to these things. And the time. In the past, we used to spend a lot of emphasis placed on maybe midweek meetings or during the evening. That has been a pretty traditional way of doing it. However, a recent experience shows that people who are interested in issues will turn up on weekends to put their views forward and it gives you a much clearer run in terms of time. I have always been amazed at the amount of people prepared to give up Saturdays and even Sundays to come to meetings on public policy issues.

Who is Included and Excluded?

Who is included

Several New Zealand interviewees revealed that participatory government processes commonly target non-traditional participant populations and indigenous groups, such as the Maori and other Pacific Island communities. As one federal administrator described, public participation processes "bring in what we called I guess the non-traditional participations...so people who were not the usual suspects". This official revealed that on the federal or national level, public participation practices and community outreach efforts consciously target "Maori and Pacific, Asian" communities. "Some of the work that we do, because our quite unique role, has also been very deliberately to target [interest group] because they're not necessarily targeted by other government departments".

"There is a special allocation" at the federal and state level that ensure the "voices of the Maori people" are incorporated in decision making and policy development in New Zealand, said one public participation practitioner. According to this interviewee, this provision or allocation also includes pacific communities such as the "Samoans, Tongans, Cook Island" and other immigrant or minority populations. Youth populations

were also characterized by practitioners and federal administrators as a less, or non-traditional participant group.

Interviewees described several mechanisms or techniques to develop ongoing opportunities for dialogue and consultation with indigenous groups and non-traditional populations. As one example, community meetings or dialogue events in New Zealand are implemented in collaboration with indigenous organizations and other agencies with “relationships with migrant and other ethnic groups.” These partnerships provide agency representatives and public participation practitioners with an expanded understanding of cultural practices, including communication preferences. As one practitioner described, tailoring public participation processes to emulate cultural practices creates an opportunity to access particular people who may have been less comfortable voicing opinions or providing input to governmental agencies through more conventional methods.

This practitioner also noted the value of working with faith communities in order to reach stakeholders. “When they come to our meeting and it’s organized properly, you have a church minister there who blesses the meeting. Then you have a person who can explain things clearly. And you have a group of people that belongs to their own community. It’s good to see someone from your own community be part of running or facilitating it.”

This same practitioner provided a detailed example of a participation technique referred to by Pacific island groups as a community “fono”. According to this interview, a ‘fono’ is “Samoan term, but it’s also used by other Pacific groups to mean a meeting”. In these meetings, agency representatives invite particular groups to ensure representation from “at least the seven main groups of Samoan, Tongan, Cook Islands, Niuean, Fiji, Tokelauan, and Tuvaluan”. Similar practices are also implemented on the federal level. As one administrator described, agencies may invite community members to participate in a dialogue event where the “entire sort of discussion was held in Samoan...because that was the language most appropriate for that group.”

Meeting location and timing is also very important in order to ensure representation from minority or non-traditional participants. According to one New Zealand federal administrator, governmental agencies may partner with community churches, schools, and other organizations to promote events or increase the community’s awareness of governmental initiatives and policy developments. A public participation practitioner expanded on the value of community partnerships, specifically the benefits of partnering with local churches to access populations that are less likely to attend more traditional or less inclusive public participation processes. This practitioner explained:

That’s the institution where most of our people are at. When I worked in early childhood education trying to promote the importance of it, if the church leaders were actually assisted to come to value all of these things, then they are in a better position to mobilize their community...Once we get the leaders enrolled, the whole community is involved.

In one case, public participation practitioners distributed small “thank-you gifts” or publicized incentives as a way of ensuring participation from specific community groups or indigenous populations. As one practitioner described, depending on the nature of the project community participants may receive “koha” in the form of a thank you card or a “\$20 petrol voucher” for attending a targeted focus group or completed a preference survey. This practitioner later explained that these “incentivized” practices help to emphasize the agency’s desire to give “back to the community”.

By comparison, Australian interviewees also emphasized a “strong multicultural base” in public participation processes, including historically underrepresented populations such as Aboriginal communities, minority groups, and youth (Australian state elected official). In order to continue developing this multicultural base in public participation practices, elected official and state administrators encouraged the use of creative, culturally appropriate, and visually engaging facilitation techniques. As one state elected official explained “I think you got to be very, very clear about the audience that you are dealing with and what their expectations and what their understanding ought to be and the types of information you are presenting. That is important that you get that right, otherwise people are going either under prepared, or poorly prepared, or do not actually understand the issues they are being asked to discuss”.

An Australian state elected official highlighted the use of creative facilitation techniques and communication technology to encourage feedback in a culturally appropriate and responsive manner. This official began by describing the regional focus of a specific planning project. In his description, this project “used three-dimensional plots” to talk with Aboriginal groups, as noted earlier in this report.

Efforts are also made to include those who do not traditionally participate through such events as community cabinet meetings, described earlier. One Australian state elected official said “...with the community cabinet meetings, you can have 300 or 400 people involved, and some of them will never have had any contact with government in this way before. And they just come along out of interest and they will listen, occasionally they will ask questions. The people that ask the questions are usually the people that either they are working on an issue, with a group of people in an organized way, or they are individuals who are disaffected for various reasons...”

In Australia, there continues to be an emphasis to include members of the broad community in all public participation practices, specifically at the state level. As one official described, “We have a community mandate to operate and we are doing that for people in the state...so it is not only the local community that we are concerned about; it is the wider community.” This administrator went on to highlight the role of public practitioners in ensuring broad representation.

“We need to be sure that we are consulting with a wide enough group rather than just a group who might be affected by it. Obviously, the group who may be affected by it will be interested in offsets or how we can help them. So I guess that put the answer more in a way which says that you need to be very careful that the groups that you are consulting will include those who will benefit from the project, as well

as those who may be adversely affected, and that you give each due weight in making important decisions”.

A state administrator who echoed this point and also noted the challenges of inclusion, said:

At a broader level, I think [there are] multicultural interests in the state. We have -- and are developing a very strong multicultural base. You do not necessarily get the broadest multicultural perspective that you could. But again, you cannot have everything at every single process. I think we went a long way down that track when we conducted [project name]. We did include indigenous, we did include youth and we did include multi-cultural groups, specifically as a subset of the broader dialogue day. But in general terms, we are running one-off processes even though they may not have several hundred people. It is very hard to get a true cross-section of society's interests.

Interviewees emphasized the role of the internet in encouraging and ensuring participation from less traditional, or more marginalized populations. As one Australian state elected official described, “Increasingly, governments are using the Internet to seek the advice of people on issues that require public feedback. In major draft plans that are put out by the government, people now have the opportunity to use the Internet to respond, to send in their submissions not just through printed material, but, through the Internet”. This official reflected on the efficiency of online consultation, explaining that the “use of technology” in public participation and deliberative processes “proved to be a very effective way to collect the views of a lot of people in a sophisticated and efficient way.”

In recent years, local governments and federal agencies across Australia and New Zealand have begun to broaden access to public participation processes through several mechanisms, including online consultations, perception surveys, and targeted youth events. Interviewees revealed a tremendous amount of success with these less conventional methods of consultation, and have subsequently supported a shift away from a more traditional concept of public participation that requires groups of citizens to physically attend a meeting or event to engage in policy making. Creating additional opportunities for input and feedback help more marginalized populations overcome “structural difficulties” such as child care, transportation, access, education, socioeconomic status, or language barriers. As one New Zealand federal administrator described, there are “all sorts of things that sometimes are quite hidden that prevent people from engaging”. Public participation practices are expanding to include less convention inspired by the “benefits of technology” to enable people to comment on policy discussions or local planning projects from home. A federal administrator from New Zealand explained how these mechanisms create and support opportunities for involvement, specifically from populations who would be less likely, or unable to attend a public meeting or community event.

Online consultation and other creative uses of communication technology also help to enable youth participation. A local Australian elected official explained that on the local

level, there are a number of “youth participation initiatives which are absolutely focus on engaging young people both in the process of local government and central government, and while they don’t have huge spread, they’re quite innovative, they’re network-based, they’re youth council-based in terms of having some representatives locally, and they use a mix of technologies, the web and the text kind of thing, and that nature of language that have that would be more engaging of young people”. Other youth programs in Australia encourage participation with youth through informal community events centered within specific housing areas. As one Australian elected official described, local housing commissions run a community “café” and employ “youth workers” to “go down, chat with the kids”.

New Zealand interviewees revealed that public participation processes on the national, state, and local level tend to engage specific stakeholder groups, specifically if the scope of the project is to engage with targeted populations on issues related to program efficiency, access to social services, and government initiatives. This same official explained, “A lot of the people that we engage with have some kind of interest in either the issues, the specific issues we are dealing or they are interested in having a voice in helping to shape things”. Interest groups could include “people who probably have some other interest or stake in the issue...like people with disabilities, for example”. In other projects, stakeholder groups may include a broad target sample including “groups that represent mothers, fathers, spouses, de facto partners, children, young people, grandparents and the elderly, caregivers, men and women, providers of social services” said a second federal administrator from New Zealand.

A New Zealand practitioner explained, “On the public side, we would also work with groups of stakeholders who might have a specific interest in the particular policy under consideration”. Implementing public participation processes designed specifically to engage specific stakeholder groups or community representatives can present challenges. As one federal official described, working with targeted stakeholder groups creates a risk that public participation processes may appear exclusive. As this official noted, “If you leave people outside of the tent, that can have consequences” which are “not always positive”. For this reason, even targeted public participation efforts are advertised or described in a way that encourages broad representation including residents outside of community stakeholder groups or impacted communities.

Access with these stakeholder groups can be maintained through a variety of community partnerships built upon a strong understanding of the service groups and stakeholder populations. As one New Zealand federal administrator described, these social service program participants or recipients are engaged through a series of “parallel processes” including both surveys and public meetings. “The meetings we did around the out-of-school services was a very deliberate kind of gap-filling exercise because the more formal consultation that the lead government agency was undertaking very much focused on service providers and did not, wasn’t asking for the views of the people that used them.” Similarly, this specific project distributed surveys to stakeholder groups to capture input from community representatives who were unable to attend the public meeting. These surveys included “questions on parenting,

parenting education programs, whether people have accessed programs, whether they would access programs..." explained the federal official.

In New Zealand other public participation processes ensure broad representation through large scale outreach campaigns concentrated within geographic boundaries. As one practitioner explained, there are people who don't belong to any community stakeholder groups. In order to ensure access, public participation processes may "randomly select particular streets or a block of streets of when we try to try to access people for a particular purpose."

Similarly, stakeholder groups and active community residents were consistently identified by Australian interviewees as those groups or populations most likely to engage in public participation practices. As one elected official described, stakeholder groups in many state-led consultation processes could include a range of interested residents from multiple interest groups including representatives "on the business side, on the labor side, on the welfare side, on the environmental side". Interviewees revealed that even in public participation or deliberative processes that aim to engage the larger public, meetings tend to be dominated by residents or community groups with a vested interest in the topic area.

As one local level administrator described, "I think that there's the empowered people who are just legitimately interested, and they're usually issue-based, they are either an environment group, or you know, and, so, they'll tend to become involved, but only within that particular area of interest. There are a handful of people who get involved broadly, but that's pretty much the way it is." According to an Australian state elected official, people that engage in public participation processes at the state level tend to be "sufficiently motivated" to either discuss a specific topic of concern, or policy decisions. In this sense, "there is no way in the world it is a random sample or a representative sample of people... I mean, they are a self-selected group".

Who is excluded

Australian and New Zealand interviewees highlighted who or what groups they saw as being excluded from public participation practices.

In the Australian participatory governance system, interviewees highlighted several subsets of the larger population who would be excluded from consultation processes. According to one state elected official, residents who "do not necessarily have the formal education to enable them to use the internet" have a difficult time accessing information or providing feedback on specific policy decisions. "Those who do not have access to the Internet and the information it provides and the opportunities it provides are in a disadvantaged position, I think in the contemporary community".

Technology seems to be more and more of an issue. "Obviously, I think computer literacy is becoming an important question of equality and exclusion" said an Australian state elected official. "So, those who do not have access to the Internet and the

information it provides and the opportunities it provides are in a disadvantaged position, I think, in the contemporary community. As we know, that's a matter that governments need to concern themselves with in terms of the provision of infrastructure generally throughout the community, so you can access to the Internet in a speedy and efficient way, but also, perhaps, to provide good education for people who haven't necessarily had that formal education to enable them to use the Internet. I know there are some quite encouraging programs with senior citizens, for example, where they can go to short courses to take on the Internet. I think there is definitely an inequality in that area."

Another Australian interviewee concurred "Obviously, in the online environment, we're really conscious that we haven't got a truly representative panel at this point, I mean, an immediate skew towards woman for a start on our online panel. But, we're consciously targeting communities where we want to make sure that we lift the numbers of the membership up, particularly Maori and Pacific, Asian and men".

Similarly, residents who may "not be of a particularly high socioeconomic status" are often left out of specific policy discussions, according to an Australian state administrator. This same official acknowledged that citizens with disabilities (visually impaired, hearing impaired), or residents who have reading difficulties could be excluded from public participation processes.

The age profile of participants tends to suggest that the large majority of many consultation processes tends to "be the baby boomer generation". According to an interview with one Australian state administrator, this population tends to "have a different view about government". This same official explained that young people are typically excluded from many participation processes unless they are specifically targeted. "It is very hard to get certain people from the younger age groups involved; even when they say they will turn out, quite often they do not." Younger generations are difficult to engage, "while they are interested, they are busy doing their own things", said a second state administrator. "I think the inequality between those who seek to get involved and do become involved and those who, perhaps, have a more private existence needs to be better, that balance needs to be better reflected in the processes we've set up". (Australian state elected official)

At the local level, governments struggle to ensure representation from members of cultural backgrounds or "primarily disenfranchised" populations (Australian local level administrator).

New Zealand interviewees revealed several groups traditionally excluded from participation at the federal level including Pacific Island and Asian immigrant populations. In order to ensure broader representation from these populations, governmental agencies are "consciously targeting communities where we want to make sure that we lift the numbers of the membership up, particularly Maori and Pacific, Asian and men", said one federal administrator. According to this official, "I would say, that, probably it's still an area in New Zealand that needs a lot more work, I think there are

probably, as I say, the usual suspects who will always feel confident participating and having a say, and others that really just don't have a comprehension that it's their right to do so."

According to interviews with New Zealand based public participation practitioners, Pacific Island or immigrant populations that do not belong to a particular community group, such as the church, tend to be overlooked in public participation processes because access is more difficult. This practitioner said, "I know that we have missed out, particularly with smaller groups like the Tokelauans, the Tuvaluans, and the Fijians. When we look at our statistics at the end of the day, they are not really represented."

Moreover, processes of consultation may exclude "those who don't have the skills, time or energy to read through weighty government tomes. So some of the propositions at the government level in terms of what's being talked about, what the issues are, and what it is that people being asked to think about and respond to are inaccessible because the language, the formats, the complexity of the material and information is presented in a way that it's just hard for people to grasp. That particularly shuts out people whose educational levels are not high, it also shuts out people for whom, in New Zealand's context, English is a second language" (New Zealand public participation practitioner). According to this practitioner, "if there's a target group that I think we miss often, its people who are in employment" who tend to be too busy to attend meetings or dialogue events.

Age can also be an issue. An Australian state administrator said, "if you look at the age profile of the many consultations the team makes, they tend to be the baby boomer generation, and getting young people involved unless you specifically target them is actually very difficult. They have probably a different view about government generally. They do not necessarily participate with things that have long-term thinking or strategic thinking behind them." Another state administrator said "The young people are hard to involve because while they are interested, they are busy doing their own things and not [indiscernible]. I do feel that there are a number of people who just do not have the time, those who are time poor and working families. So you probably are not getting the young people. You probably are not getting the families. You are more likely to get people who are older and retired, and in fact that is being quite a problem with us in [community name], in terms of the skewed influence. It is mainly the people who do not want any change who tend to want to have a say and to dominate."

Sometimes the process itself can lead to exclusion. An Australian state administrator observed and thought "there are a lot of impediments" to participation. "I mentioned earlier some of the socio-cultural impediments of getting truly representative views. I think that is implicit in any form of social research in a broad scale. I think that there are also impediments from people actually not really understanding the process that they are involved in itself with planning. Planning processes tend to be complex and it is very hard to take all unless they are experienced in the area to really understand at what level they are talking about with respect to a particular issue and how that can

influence it. Sometimes, people in consultation means you are talking about broad conceptual, strategic directions."

Similarly, a New Zealand public participation practitioner observed that "...government is more often comfortable with surrogate representatives, so, the people who head an organization, governments finds it easier to talk to organizations than individuals, and, so, they are seen to be representative of particular segments of the community, but, actually, I think, often those agencies are no more representative than the government who is engaging them. So, that, it shuts out people who are not connected and to those existing agencies and active within those existing stakeholder groups or agencies."

Time limitations also lead to exclusion. An Australian state administrator expressed sympathy for "a number of" citizens "because if you are going to participate in those things as a citizen, you have to put in a lot of private time and a lot of work. You are not paid doing that, so you tend to get people participating who either got the time or feel very strongly about it. And it is very hard to get average people who might have a more general view participating." Similarly, a New Zealand federal administrator expressed the challenges associated with this issue "...we hold a lot of these during the day, so, that automatically prevents quite a number of people from being able to attend, even the ones we've held in the evening, of course, there are the usual reasons why, there are difficulties there. Despite the fact that we've held quite a number of them in real terms have been, the numbers aren't big." From the public participation practitioner perspective in New Zealand, "if there's a target group that I think we miss often, its people who are in employment and who are busy, basically."

Another interviewee, a state elected official in Australia, observed that some people "are not interested in politics, they are not interested in politicians, they are just running their own lives or doing their own thing, so that group of people that really do not have an issue and so therefore do not necessarily have a message that they want to get across to government. I mean, you have got to be sufficiently motivated to either have something of concern to you that you are not happy about and therefore want to use the opportunity to come and talk about it, or your interest in politics generally on what government is doing, or you just feel a bit curious about, well, what really goes on there."

An Australian state elected official also noted how language and bureaucracy can lead to exclusion. "One area where I think it's still difficult for people is working the bureaucracy, the paperwork involved. ... They're not accessible. I mean, they are, but, if you're a person that hasn't, perhaps your literacy level is rather nonexistent and you're a non-English speaking person, I think accessing a bureaucracy would be a very difficult process". I think non-English speaking, new arrivals, those without access to the Internet. I think bureaucracies need to spend more time consulting with people about the forms they use, the appropriateness of those forms, the ability of people to read them properly, and I still think there's more to be done in that area." Literacy and socio-economic status also were factors in exclusion, said one Australian state administrator. "I still think there are issues with people who may not be of a particularly

high socioeconomic status. I think people who may have reading difficulties, for instance. I think people who may actually have some disabilities may not be able to participate as much as they would like to. Certainly, indigenous communities in the state, unless they are specifically targeted, have difficulty getting involved for a whole range of issues both institutional as well as the nature of the processes that are run."

The costs associated with engagement activities were raised. A New Zealand federal administrator explained how his/her agency serves a broad range of people, including "Pacific Island, yes, and we have quite a large Asian population, made up of a variety of different ethnicities, different nationalities." However, this person said, "we haven't done very well there, either, partly because we just haven't put the effort into it, and that's, not so much because we don't recognize it," but due to limited resources.

Barriers to participation

Interviews also identified several barriers to participation:

Structural Barriers – Australian and New Zealand interviews suggested that structural barriers inherent in participatory governance processes across administrative levels create obstacles for specific populations including:

- Non-English speakers
- Residents with disabilities (hearing impaired, physically disabled, visual impaired)
- Illiterate populations, including those residents who may be less computer literate
- Indigenous communities, including Aboriginal populations, Pacific Island and Asian immigrant populations

Bureaucratic processes often require large amounts of paperwork and a thorough understanding of governance structures, policy decisions, and agency deadlines. As one Australian state elected official described, "What I think is still difficult for people is working the bureaucracy, the paperwork involved. I think a lot of bureaucracies haven't done enough work on the nature of the material they're giving to people in order for them to get a license".

Meeting materials and community consultation events tend to be traditionally held in English, with an emphasis on the use of written handouts and presentation materials. Similarly, meetings tend to be held in English. Interviewees explained how this meeting structure creates obstacles for specific groups including less literate populations, visually impaired residents, and non-English speakers.

"If you're a person that hasn't, perhaps your literacy level is rather nonexistent and you're a non-English speaking person, I think accessing a bureaucracy would be a very difficult process. I think non-English speaking, new arrivals, those without access to the Internet. I think bureaucracies need to spend more time consulting with people about the forms they use, the appropriateness of those forms, the ability of people to read them properly, and I still think there's more to be done in that area" (Australian state elected official)

This issue was also raised by Australian officials at the local level. One local level administrator reflected on the shifting demographics in many Australian communities. In this interview, the official explained that many communities are witnessing an increase in Chinese immigrant populations. Communicating with these populations through traditional consultation practices present an obvious challenge in regards to language barriers and communication styles. This official explained “I’ve seen meetings where we’ve had big meetings targeting the Chinese community, and we’ve had a translator, and you still can’t communicate. There’s this huge communication block. They all sit there and smile at you. At the end, you ask any questions, and the ones who have a reasonable command of English will get up and say things like, look, I’m not a spokesperson, but, I can understand what these people are saying in their own language to each other, and, they’re not understanding much about what you’re saying”.

Similarly, the structure of public meetings and traditional public participation practices at the state level create obstacles for indigenous communities. As one state administrator explained unless indigenous communities are specifically targeted to participate, they “have difficulty getting involved for a whole range of issues both institutional as well as the nature of the processes that are run”. At times, governmental agencies may lack the resources to expand participation processes to include more culturally appropriate techniques. This barrier was also mentioned in interviews with New Zealand federal administrators.

“Pacific Island, yes, and we have quite a large Asian population, made up of a variety of different ethnicities, different nationalities. And we haven’t done very well there, either, partly because we just haven’t put the effort into it, and that’s, not so much because we don’t recognize it, but because there is, we’ve got the resources that we’ve got.”

The timing and location of public events and participation processes can present a significant obstacle for specific populations. Interviewees highlighted office hours, meeting locations, and the physical location of governmental offices as potential barriers to participation. As one local level administrator described, the physical presence of municipal buildings can discourage people from stopping by to discuss issues with local councillors and agency staff.

“The configuration of the Municipal Building here in [community name] is really poor...The presentation to the customers is all these steel bars, you know, security screens down, that looks horrible. And so, we tend to not get the level of visitation into the Council customer service area that we should have”.

The timing of meetings also creates a barrier to participation. According to practitioners and federal administrators in New Zealand, “there are obvious impediments or obstacles, and we hold a lot of these during the day, so, that automatically prevents quite a number of people from being able to attend, even the ones we’ve held in the evening, of course, there are the usual reasons why, there are difficulties there”. Moreover, governments can be resistant to publicizing meeting information, or invite community input on specific decisions or policy discussions. As one public

practitioner described, at times ministers can be resistant to making decisions “in a fish bowl”.

Lack of relationship or trust – Interviews emphasized the challenges and barriers presented when governments do not establish relationships with communities before asking for input and feedback on a variety of governmental programs or policy issues. If government agencies “don’t have any pre-existing engagement of relationship or trust”, communities may become resistant to outreach efforts, said one New Zealand federal administrator”. Developing relationships with indigenous communities, specifically the Maori and Aboriginal populations, is an essential step for governmental agencies. As one New Zealand administrator described, “If the government agency doesn’t have a relationship with the communities that they’re looking to engage with” residents may feel that “they’ve gone from being invisible, or not particularly relevant, to wanting an intimate, constructive engagement”.

Dominance of stakeholders and interest groups – Consultation processes often attract interested parties and stakeholder groups. Interviews suggested that meetings can often become dominated by these stakeholders and interest groups, at times deterring other less vocal community members from attending dialogue events or public meetings. “I think of the issues you have with local planning questions is that, ‘the usual suspects’...tend to be very local in their thinking, but they may not represent the broad strand of opinion”, said one Australian state elected official. If meetings are not well organized or facilitated, participation may be limited. “People feel that they cannot express their views because it may be criticized by others. We do need to make sure that the processes are well designed and to try to keep away from public meetings being organized by lobby groups” (Australian state administrator). Moreover, “if we only consult with the people around [planning project], they are usually the people who are affected but not necessarily using the project.” Interviewees placed an emphasis on the presence of NIMBYism (Not In My Backyard) at local meetings, specifically when dealing with the siting of contentious facilities. According to one New Zealand practitioner, “I’ve seen clients and government agencies on one hand think, well, we have to consult, but, actually, just finding it is a process for people to scream at them, saying, no, no, not here, not here, not here, and that it’s just an exercise in containing outrage”.

Lack of interest or general apathy – General apathy was referenced as a barrier to participation. In one interview, an Australian state elected official described a nation-wide tendency toward apathy specifically in regards to participatory governance.

“In our society there are definitely structural forces at work, which are pushing people into their private space. I think, obviously, the media, consumption, the idea that, the way you live is to consume things rather than to do things, the idea that you receive information rather than make information, through your own actions.”

Access to information – “I think that there are also impediments from people actually not really understanding the process that they are involved in itself with planning”, said

one Australian state administrator. “ Planning processes tend to be complex and it is very hard to take all unless they are experienced in the area to really understand at what level they are talking about with respect to a particular issue and how that can influence it.” According to an interview with one locally elected Australian official, “most people in the community have no idea really what their local council does”. A limited understanding of governmental practices or political structures restricts both the ability and the desire to participate in public participation processes. Other interviewees revealed that the large majority of the public does not seem to “understand the mechanisms you can use, I guess, to take part in that decision-making process, or have an input into it, for whatever reason, whether it’s technology or remote location or just lack of awareness and information” (New Zealand federal administrator).

On the local level, this lack of public awareness can also create barriers to basic democratic accesses such as the right to vote. According to one Australian local level administrator:

“we got criticized for not publicizing adequately, and a lot of people didn’t vote, then they got penalized by the state electoral office for not voting, and, so, there was a fair amount of concern expressed in that...it just taught us the lesson that we can’t just take these things for granted, you can’t just think you stick an ad in the paper and people are going to respond. Not everyone reads the paper. You’ve got to actually think of a suite of communications that go out, so, you go to your libraries and you go to your community centers, and you go where the people are and you try to make sure that there’s information given out and people are encouraged to participate.”

Public perception that outcomes and decisions are pre-determined – Interviewees identified negative public perceptions of participatory governance structures as a consistent and dominant barrier to active participation. “People are distrustful of government at any level because they often feel, oh, we’re being consulted, or, you know, they can go out there and say, oh, we’ve consulted widely, and in the end they do what they want to do anyway”, explained one Australian local level administrator. Moreover, citizens feel “like they give this information to a government agency and they never see any evidence of it going anywhere or making any difference, or, actually, they’re not seeing their own input having an impact. And, so, I think that kind of develops quite a cynical attitude to any encouragement to participate.” (New Zealand federal administrator)

The public’s perception that decisions are pre-determined can create significant barriers to participation. For some agencies, this notion of consultation where “frameworks and agendas tend to be set before the public has an opportunity to engage” generates a cynicism that can prevent access. Overcoming this assumption or perception proves very challenging for local governments and state agencies. As one Australian state elected official described “You can listen to them, you can take on board their ideas, you can take some of their ideas, you can modify your own position to a certain extent and try and meet them halfway or some way. But ultimately, I mean, if the government still

goes away and does something else, people say, 'Oh, they did not listen'. Everybody knows that, I'm just stating the obvious."

Research Question 3

What positive and negative outcomes occur as a result of public participation/deliberation in government decision-making processes?

This question examines the positive and negative outcomes from engagement processes in Australia and New Zealand. The purpose of this series of questions was to identify what interviewees themselves and/or their organizations perceived or understood resulted from engaging people. Questions also addressed the ethical dimension of engagement and its possible implications.

Nine kinds of broad outcomes from public participation and deliberative processes were reported by Australian and New Zealand interviewees. These included:

Modify/Reconcile Policy

- "There's no doubt, sometimes when the government proposes a controversial measure and finds that the feedback for the community, either through public demonstration, through correspondence, through the mail or through the Internet, through opposition activity in the community threatening the political position of some of the members of Parliament, governments will often either modify or drop initiatives that are controversial. So, that's a response to public input, of a direct type," an Australian state elected official said. This official also explained that public participation processes can push "governments to alter their plans in the interest of the community, I found that generally governments are now responsive at that level. They may not want to change what they're doing, but they will be willing to amend it in order to take into account local interests."
- "In some ways, it might be a dominant local community issue that has come forward. But one of the issues, one of the things, I guess, that play in public policy continue to get involved in is trying to reconcile local issues and needs from regional interests and state interests," an Australian state administrator said. This same official indicated "But it is fair to say that these techniques do have a significant impact on decisions that have to be made. But there is still a need to make decisions which will adversely affect community but the issue is being aware of how these adverse effects can be reconciled and overcome."
- "And, so, as we always do, we have a meeting to determine the plan and to determine the submissions, and we invite the people who made the submissions to come in and make personal representations, to speak to their submissions. They did this, and, in the end, the Council actually included some additional provisions and some additional funding in its budget to accommodate some of those requirements," said an Australian local administrator. This official also said, "I think as long as you do that, that you engage them, and that you can

show that you've listened to them, and you've taken on board their concerns and it maybe has changed policy or changed the strategic direction that you're following as a result of that, I think that's what most people expect."

- "So, here was an instance where officials were, and politicians were moved to change their mind off the back of consultation, and, in fact, think differently about how they might go ahead and do that," said a New Zealand public participation practitioner.

Conflict Resolution

- An Australian state elected official said, "sometimes you get issues where there are the two extreme views, and, through a creative process of consultation between those two views, a reconciliation can occur as one side listens to the other, the other side listens to the other, and you start to work out a creative solution, which is a win/win, rather than a win/loss situation."
- "And so, I've seen him with very angry people, able to diffuse the situation with them with empathetic listening, and humor, and treat people with respect," an Australian state elected official said.

Public Awareness

- A New Zealand Federal Administrator said, "when we've gone out into communities, that they've been quite keen to receive just our regular newsletter. And, so, that's quite a good way, we're quite conscious of keeping good updates in there about where things are in the policy process, and how things, information from the community is feeding into it."
- An Australian state elected official said, "you will see what came out of that cabinet meeting, that community cabinet meeting. But it is also an opportunity for the government to sort of go there and dispense largesse. And so they'll announce funding for this and funding for that, you know."
- "I think it is really important that people do understand that they have been involved. Probably the highest compliment that I can think of after consultation process and the decisions has been made is that we did not like the decision but we did actually think that the engagement was positive and we felt that we were listened to as a team," said an Australian state administrator.
- "I think that the amount of trust that developed between the group was actually quite significant. People could see that things were being done and after a while, that group still met as I understand it," said an Australian state administrator.
- "I think the public is also getting to the point where they are interested in knowing what they can influence, and what they cannot influence, and what the ground rules are," an Australian state administrator said.
- "I think there is a growing number of Pacific people who are now more aware of government and how to work with it. For instance, with the Immigration Act review that I mentioned earlier, when they found out as a community, they decide. Pacific communities from ethnic groups – the Tongans, for instance,

organized their own community meeting. They invite and seek an extension of the submission due date, and they worked towards that,” said a New Zealand public participation practitioner.

Influence Decision Making

- A New Zealand public participation practitioner said, having people “participate in some of the processes, which result in government changing their position and, in fact, initiating new policy as a result of the kind of engagement they have with public.”
- “But that’s the way we approach that kind of support for the community. So it’s more community empowerment,” an Australian locally elected official said.
- “So, in Western Australia in particular, I think the communities’ views are very influential,” said an Australian state administrator. This same official said, “Often, these processes will shape the direction of governance in the future.”
- “It held by oral submissions and written submissions and it received something like 10,000 written submissions expressing concern loosely around those three issues, either cultural concerns or spiritual concerns or ethical concerns in relation to [subject area]. So, when the [formal government body] reported, it recommended that it establish a [organization name] to look at these, look at a more sort of high-level principle view of the kinds of new and emerging [subject area], and the issues that they raise, beyond just risk,” said a New Zealand federal administrator. This same official said: “Having said that, we are now, the government is now moving to establish a formal process at cabinet level whereby the recommendations and advice that the [organization name] gives government is considered and acted on. So, we’re going to a much more formalized process.”
- A New Zealand federal administrator commented: “Our experience is that people actively engage in these things when they’re given the opportunity to, and given the encouragement to, and they provide us, and government, with many, very, practical, well thought out, actually policy suggestions that could easily find their way directly into policy.”
- “I can think of numerous road projects where there are quite serious adjustments made to the construction of the road as a result of public feedback. I can think of quite important adjustments made to school projects, to hospital projects, to make them work better in the context of the local community,” said an Australian state elected official. This person also said, “where there’s real serious consultation that leads to the adjustments of the plans to meet the needs of the community. I think that’s a very good thing for modern government”. Further “they believed it really did save them money and it certainly allowed them to deliver on time and they got a benefit out of that”.

Broaden Agency Understanding

- “One of the things I’ve seen is them obtaining a better understanding of the realities of Pacific people – meaning the issues that concern them and impact on their lives,” said a New Zealand public participation practitioner.

- It “gave government a sort of insight as to how they might engage both the New Zealand public who had some interest in this topic, and people who were deeply, passionately interested in this topic engaged in decision-making,” said a New Zealand public participation practitioner.

Program Efficiency

- “In other words, it helps executives as well as improves the performance of the democracy overall,” said an Australian state elected official.
- Participation considered the “views of the people that used them [services],” said a New Zealand federal administrator.

Community Building

- “I’m seeing things happen from the community coming together as a group and deciding for themselves that this is what we’re going to go for and seeking inputs into different government agencies’ policies,” said a New Zealand public participation practitioner.

Public Support

- “And as a result, we obtain a much better outcome which meant that - when we spoke about that to the community, they felt really happy because I said, we identified this problem, you have now addressed it. So I guess something very encouraging was that if you can show people that you listen and keep faith in that you try, you do tend to get the support,” according to an Australian state administrator. This person also said, “That is a hard one. Many have been able to measure the outcomes in terms of the degree of support for something or the weightings or the preferences. We are trying to be a knowledge-based organization and use the knowledge to build on the next process”.

Creates a Cost Effective Use of Resources

“Can I say, there is one other area here that I should mention, and, this is a letter from a construction company that built a road, and they estimated, this is very important, they estimated that the consultation strategy delivered a 5 to 1 – dollar return on their investment. In other words, they saved \$5.00 for every \$1.00 that was invested in the consultation process. Because of the alliance contract, they gained, from the better delivery, they got a return on that, and that was their estimate,” an Australian state administrator said.

Impact on decisions

Interviewees identified the following influences or potential impacts for public participation and deliberative activities:

- **Increasing Community Capacity to Influence Decisions.** So while it was a public meeting, we also used the community networks to bring their people into those meetings,” said a New Zealand federal administrator.

- **Inform Policy.** A New Zealand public participation practitioner said, “research results and how their different government agencies would work to implement the research findings and recommendations – I think you can see some impact there.” A New Zealand federal administrator said, “of the emerging findings, where, I guess, the majority lies, and that sort of thing, and that will inform the advocacy that we undertake.”
- **Strengthen Deliberative Processes.** “So, the ordinary citizen tends not to engage the Council, unless the Council goes out and makes it look like it’s actually interested in what those people have to say. So, we’re busily trying to, we’ve actually been doing some work with [consultant name], and one of the reasons we are working with them is that they impressed us with their preparedness to work with our staff to not only actively become involved in consultation processes themselves in a professional capacity, but also to endeavor to impart enhanced skills and understanding about the benefits of community engagement and how to best go about it in different circumstances so that there is a residual benefit to the organization and a growing base of expertise in relation to community engagement,” said an Australian local administrator. This same person said, “So, we engaged [consultant name] and they came in and sat down with the Council and said, ‘well, yes, we’re happy to help and we’re happy to target so that you get a good, equitable response from the various users of the park’. By them talking to the Councilors about how they go about that, we’re saying to the Councilors ‘look, this is how things should be done’, so, we need to sort of develop policies about our community engagement strategies in the future and how we go about it.” In addition, there was “a commitment to better community engagement.” A New Zealand federal administrator said. “I guess, from people who, we ask people who have participated in meetings how they felt about that, whether they, you know, how they felt about the process, have they been heard, are there things we could have done better.”
- **Improving Delivery and Quality of Public Services.** “So, proactively [we’re] using the community’s feedback to improve the range of services and the quality of services that we provide,” said an Australian local administrator.
- **Broadening Agency Understanding.** “We’ve been privileged to do work with clients where at the beginning of the work I think that if you’d have asked the policy-makers and decision-makers whether they thought the consultation would make any difference the answer would have been, ‘no, but we have to do it’. To then see the feedback and have them participate in some of the processes, which result in government changing their position and, in fact, initiating new policy as a result of the kind of engagement they have with public” said a New Zealand public participation practitioner. This same practitioner said, “So, here was an instance where officials were, and politicians were moved to change their mind off the back of consultation, and, in fact, think differently about how they

might go ahead and do that.” Another New Zealand public participation practitioner said, “We had done some work for [organization name] and we interviewed 575 Pacific people. [Description of organization acronym.] One of the issues raised there was the lack of awareness of fair entitlement. It’s they’re involved in an injury and the kind of entitlement they can get from [organization name] to assist them to access the doctors.”

How is feedback provided?

Interviewees noted instances where feedback does or does not occur as a result of participatory or deliberative processes.

Continual engagement, not just one-off engagement. An Australian state elected official explained how a continued process accomplished this purpose, noting that “consultation over the implementation of that plan has continued with those people, following the ending of the actual assembly, which occurred on one weekend. So we’ve tried to keep them involved in the process, over time.” However, this person also said, “I think we need to spend more time thinking about that. In countries like America where you don’t have compulsory voting, you could test that by saying, well, are more people voting than they did before. We have compulsory voting, so that’s not such an issue. I think you can develop measures about the number of people that are volunteering and participating in the community, and I think more, rather than less, would be a sign of success.”

Another Australian state elected official said feedback happens on a one-on-one basis, with interactions taking place “with each minister and each minister will have lots of delegations.” An example of “the basic sort of things that the minister will say are, ‘Well, okay, we have had this meeting and now I’ll be getting back to you.’ And so they will have to go back, and they will have to discuss the situation, and decide what the minister is going to do, so there will always be correspondence follow-up obviously. That is the basic follow up.”

“So at the very least, people want feedback about their particular issue that they had their meeting about. So it generates another whole raft of letter writing, and bureaucrats’ briefing, and sort of making decisions about what are we going to do about these issues,” said this person. In particular, “there is actually a very strong feedback loop; that it is individual rather than collective.”

Speed of feedback is important. An Australian state administrator said, “One of the things we have found in post-process interviews with people being able to write their satisfaction with the day is when we achieved extremely high satisfaction levels, usually in the high 80-90 percent level for all peoples.” Despite this, this person said, “The important thing, though, from my point of view, is that people actually get feedback from the day very quickly and that they understand the nature of the decision-making process that we are following, and how their particular views will be taken into account.”

“It is very important that they will have some idea of closure in terms of process, and know that they should get feedback from the process they are involved in as quickly as they can, they also need to understand when and how decisions are being made and the justification and rationale for that decision,” said the Australian state administrator. “Yes, unfortunately I guess these things start off with good intentions and they tend to be making some feedback from maybe 6 or 12 months afterwards, but it is fair to say that the manner of reporting can tend to tailor off.”

Listening and consideration as key. Another Australian state administrator said, “what we found to be particularly important is to be able to demonstrate later how we have taken on board what they have said. So at least twice a year, we will do a briefing on what we have done in response toward what people have said.” However, the administrator said, this organization does “need to be more systematic. We have a very good systematic process with customers where we capture what they want and we can show them a year later what we have done.”

Moreover “willingness” to participate, I found, does come much better if you can demonstrate to people how you have used and taken into account their input. I have actually been very encouraged with people’s continued willingness to participate if you do that,” this person said. “I think quite often in our portfolio reporting back, we have done it quite well in the rail project. We are doing up well on the [physical location] at the moment. We do it quite well at the informal meetings that we have with the smaller groups. It is the degree to which we provide that feedback to the general public, as to look carefully at the public input and this was the result.”

At the local level, an Australian local administrator said, “if we don’t effectively engage with our community we tend to hear from our community through a source of, through means of complaint, rather than in a proactive and positive way. And so, we can end up spending a lot of our time responding to individual complaints, and, if you’re not careful, you can find that people who feel empowered to lodge complaints and have no difficulty engaging Council.” This interviewee noted, “statistically, it’s interesting to see how many people have responded and I suppose that shows a level of interest, but, in terms of the effectiveness, I think the quality of the information coming back and the level of involvement, I mean, you always get people who provide you with feedback about issues that affect them immediately, you know, it’s in my neighborhood or it’s effecting my property value or it’s I walk the dog there, or whatever, but it’s always about their immediate interest.”

A New Zealand public participation practitioner said, “if I think about the work that we specifically do, it would be rare for us not to have feedback processes as part of being able to basically tell the story of, this is what we heard, and this is what we did.” Moreover, “mostly people would get feedback certainly about what the public said, generally speaking, that does get summarized. Some of our clients are nervous about that. But it’s not always painted well in terms of telling the next part of the story, which is, and this is how we changed our decision-making.” And, “in terms of the kind of qualitative feedback, if we’ve got direct personal engagement processes, like facilitated

engagement, we would generally do a reaction evaluation at the end of each one of those. So, something simple like the dartboard or the continuum or the talking evaluation that would give us some sense of feedback about personal engagement.”

"Effectiveness check." This person also said, “for larger projects, in particular, we’d do a stakeholder check of the effectiveness of the kind of communication or information processes we’ve got going.” There are different elements included in a feedback report. “Certainly the reach one gets reported back and we do a summary of submissions or whatever it is in terms of, or commentary, from the kind of engagement,” said the New Zealand public participation practitioner, “and we would put the evaluation material in terms of people’s experience of engagement in that process.”

Building future engagement capacity. There is also an immediate feedback aspect to engagement opportunities, according to a New Zealand federal administrator. This person said, “People leave the sessions, leave the events, overwhelmingly satisfied with the time they’ve spent.” This kind of evaluation is informal. “They don’t conduct a, well, we were formally reviewed by a government agency here, and that was part of when the [organization name] was established, that after two years - although it took three years - there would be a review. And that involved a number of, 20 odd face-to-face interviews with people inside and outside government, you know, what do you think of the [organization name], is it doing a good job, is it doing the job the government set up, etc., etc.? And, that came back as overwhelmingly positive. So, there’s the one piece of formal evaluation, if you like.”

Building capacity as a result of participation is challenging. An Australian state administrator said, “The capacity is a hard one. We often speak about capability building, but I’m not sure that it is easy to do something on that other than to when people do offer their time to use that in a constructive manner. In other words, not trying to take a lot of people’s time and trying to use it less efficiently and get there then having the opportunity to input the most. So the capability building, I do find hard.”

Efforts to balance opinions.

Efforts to balance opinions reflected a range of considerations. For example, there is a desire to consider concerns from impacted residents and the broader public. “The breakout may even be caused by the fact that the overall balance of view is that it’s a good decision, but, there’s a particular group that have not benefited from it, and they may be able to mobilize the media, or something, to cause a ruckus, even though there’s a lot of consultation that’s been followed to reach the conclusion,” said an Australian state elected official. This same official also said, “There’s never, ever going to be a perfect fit between an outcome and an input, if you like, between democratic participation and democratic decision.”

Another Australian state elected official said, “The people that ask the questions are usually the people that either they are working on an issue, with a group of people in an organized way, or they are individuals who are disaffected for various reasons and they

got.” This interviewee said, “So I think the government tries to find the balance if it can between the various competing interests and the question of trying to do that.”

An Australian state administrator said that “people want -- their decision makers need to know what the community’s feelings are. Again, not just from the people who have got single issues or a particular perspective on an issue - they want to get the most random community view that they can.” Moreover, “No process is perfect, but we do try to encapsulate the broader community view.”

This means that “there are a range of issues, which, if you just focus on the local, you will never get any reconciliation,” said an Australian state administrator. Another Australian state administrator said, “if we only consult with the people around it, they are usually the people who are affected but not necessarily using the project.” This means that “you need to be very careful that the groups that you are consulting will include those who will benefit from the project, as well as those who may be adversely affected, and that you give each due weight in making important decisions.”

“But I think increasingly, getting a broad cross-section of the community involved,” said this Australian state administrator. “I have seen some interesting examples of citizens’ juries, of more participative processes, and the more that one can do that I think the better. Otherwise, one is having a few people with strong views perhaps dictating to the rest of the population.”

Cultural considerations, particularly understanding topics of importance to indigenous groups, are another kind of factor. There are “multicultural interests in the state. We have -- and are developing a very strong multicultural base. You do not necessarily get the broadest multicultural perspective that you could. But again, you cannot have everything at every single process,” said an Australian state administrator.

This official also commented, “Things such as reflecting indigenous interests are fundamentally important these days when it comes to dealing with land to water issues. The way in which they interpret landscapes and the way in which they use particular areas are quite different from the way in which white society deals with those.”

Community expectations are part of this. The community, meanwhile, expects that they will be dealt with fairly equitably and in a way that is quite transparent, and I think those expectations are not necessarily between exclusive effects. I think it is very important that staff understand very clearly the community - what their expectations are - before going into a consultation exercise,” said an Australian state administrator.

Providing information outside of conventional media outlets is a third aspect of balancing opinions. This is important “because what we often see here is through local newspapers and other information. Quite a lot of misinformation being given to the public, that if they believed it then they will be providing biased input. So, the biggest challenge, I think, to the public is to be adequately informed about all of the factors so that their input is effectively balanced because they are attaining very imbalanced input

if all I have to rely on is the media. It often is the only thing they have,” said an Australian state administrator.

Finally, **consensus building through education** is the fourth dimension of balancing opinions. “I think there’s an education process that has to go on about all these people who just want to have their own car, and they’re just going to scream at the council. So that’s one part of it, but the other part of it is, they may not want change in their streets,” said an Australian locally elected official. “To me it is always about striking a balance because there will always be different views, but we all live in this community so we all somehow have to share the space. So we need to sort of, at least I have to understand what these” opinions are.

There is also a need to “reduce some of the heat about the decision-making, and engage people in a different kind of way, and start to paint some of the kind of information about you know, the kind of more complex parts of it I guess,” said a New Zealand public participation practitioner.

Summary

Australasia - Australia and New Zealand	
Common Terms For P2	<p>Most common term was ‘public consultation’</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Community Consultation ▪ Community Engagement ▪ Community Involvement ▪ Active Decision Making ▪ Community Voices into Governmental Policies
Conceptual Definition For P2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Individuals participating in the community through regular votes and through community organizations ▪ A shared religion, a shared culture, or specific issue that inspires people to become a part of the process of involvement ▪ Active decision making that gathers input from anyone in the community who participates in decision making ▪ Two-way exchange where people are engaged and sharing ▪ Listening to the voices of the community ▪ Actively incorporating community input in a more deliberative way ▪ Trying to get feedback about what the community thinks ▪ At times, trying to convince the public to do things ▪ Relationship building and collaboration with both Maori and immigrant populations ▪ Intrinsically linked to an advocacy role, representing the true voices of the Maori people in policy making ▪ Dialogue and education as fundamental values of public participation ▪ Processes that engages residents and stakeholder groups in constructive dialogue
Select Barriers To Participation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Structural barriers across administrative levels create obstacles for non-English speakers, residents with disabilities (hearing impaired, physically disabled, visually impaired), as well as illiterate populations ▪ Structure of public meetings and traditional public participation practices at the state level

	<p>create obstacles for indigenous communities</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Office hours, meeting locations, and the physical location of governmental offices as potential barriers to participation ▪ Governments can be resistant to publicizing meeting information or inviting community input on specific decisions or policy discussions ▪ Governments do not establish relationships with communities before asking for input and feedback on programs or policy issues ▪ Meetings can often become dominated by stakeholders and interest groups ▪ If meetings are not well organized or facilitated, participation may be limited ▪ Nation-wide tendency toward apathy specifically in regards to participatory governance ▪ Limited understanding of governmental practices or political structures restricts both the ability and the desire to participate ▪ Public perception that outcomes and decisions are pre-determined ▪ Frustration with the support for and implementation of deliberative processes at the national level in New Zealand
<p>Select Examples Of Best Practices [1]</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Dialogue Events that work with the community to invite representatives from specific New Zealand interest groups (such as the Maori) and unrepresented populations ▪ Public surveys, informational seminars, online resources and other methods of communication technology ▪ Citizen Juries or Community Panels - Local governments may also engage with a random selection of residents and community interest group members through a citizens' jury or community panels ▪ Community cabinet meetings encourage community residents to engage with decision makers on a wide variety of topics
<p>Select Outcomes</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Modify and reconcile governmental policy ▪ Creative consultation techniques create opportunities for divergent parties to discuss important topics and to come together in consensus ▪ Conflict resolution ▪ Public awareness

	<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Enhanced understanding of the realities of Pacific people – meaning the issues that concern them and impact on their lives▪ Transparency and accountability▪ Creates cost-effective use of resources and program efficiency▪ Increase community capacity to influence decisions▪ Community building▪ Improve delivery and quality of public services
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[\[1\]](#) These are examples selected by the report authors; data coding did not reflect any interview responses that fall into this category