

# Discussion Guide

The Community Engagement Charter:  
*Putting people at the centre of major  
planning decisions*



2017

democracyCo



Government of South Australia

Department of Planning,  
Transport and Infrastructure

## Message from the State Planning Commission

The commencement of the new Planning, Development and Infrastructure Act brings with it the opportunity for us to do things differently in South Australia when it comes to engaging our communities in planning decisions.

For the first time in South Australia, the Act calls for the establishment of a Community Engagement Charter - to put engagement at the forefront of the planning system- arguably one of the most pivotal inclusions in the new legislation.

The recently appointed State Planning Commission is responsible for the developing and maintaining the Charter which we hope will instigate cultural change in planning in SA by providing communities with the opportunity to be meaningfully involved in planning decisions that matter to and impact on, them.

The Commission is excited to be part of an innovative process to develop the Charter that involves a collaboration of both community and practitioners.

This Discussion Guide was jointly developed by the Department of Planning, Transport and Infrastructure, democracyCo and Davis + Davis to provide 'food for thought' and support the conversations that will help shape the Charter.

We want to see people at the centre of important planning decisions and I encourage you to expand your thinking about how you can contribute to a Charter that will bring about better outcomes and better lives for all South Australians.

Kind Regards



**Tim Anderson QC**  
**Chair - South Australian Planning Commission**

## About this guide

This guide has been produced to help South Australians develop the new Community Engagement Charter for Planning.

The Charter was one of 22 recommendations developed following almost two years' consultation with over 2,500 people, led by the *'Expert Panel on Planning Reform'*. The Expert Panel consulted with community, industry, local Government and other stakeholders to hear their experience of the existing planning system and opportunities for reform. The Expert Panel provided their recommendations to Government in December 2014 and the Government responded in March 2015, following a further period of public consultation.

The Charter was one of the Expert Panels recommendations which was supported by the Government and is now one part of the wider reform of the South Australian planning system enshrined in the new Planning, Development and Infrastructure Act 2016.

This Guide includes information on what a Community Engagement Charter is, what the principles of good community engagement are, and some examples of good community engagement practice in Planning and other areas.

It also has some questions to get you thinking and talking about what should be in the Charter, and how the Charter should be used to improve community engagement in planning decisions. These questions are highlighted in the orange boxes.

## Who should read this guide?

This guide is essential reading for members of the Planning Together Panel – 50 randomly selected community members who will come together in July 2017 to develop the draft Charter in collaboration with industry and government. The information in this Guide may also be of interest to the wider community as well as planning practitioners who are impacted by, and will need to implement, the Charter in future.

If you are a member of the Planning Together Panel you will use the Guide as part of your deliberations so we encourage you to spend time reading the whole of this Guide and related links. Essential pre-reading is marked with the  icon and web-links with an  icon.

If you are not part of the Panel, but would like to contribute your ideas, we would like to hear from you too. You can respond to any of the questions in this Guide via [yourSAy.sa.gov.au](http://yourSAy.sa.gov.au). The Planning Together Panel will review your comments as part of their deliberations.

## What is the Community Engagement Charter? Why do we need it?

*“It is clear that some governments are already changing the way people are involved in planning, and this Charter will cement that cultural change for planning in South Australia to ensure we get greater clarity around community preferences, decision-makers can outline explicitly the trade-offs among competing viewpoints and the extent to which different preferences have been addressed as strategy and structure/master plans are being developed.”*

*South Australia’s Expert Panel on Planning Reform, ‘Our Ideas for Reform’, 2014*

As part of the implementation of the Planning, Development and Infrastructure Act SA 2017, members of the community and stakeholders are being brought together to develop a Community Engagement Charter for Planning in SA.

The Charter is intended build community trust and confidence in the planning system and processes, guiding how the public can participate in the planning system in SA.

It will be the first of its kind in Australia, putting consultation and participation at the very beginning of the planning process and will include measurable requirements for engaging community members on proposed changes to planning policy and strategy. The Charter will also encourage engagement to be tailored to suit the needs of the community.

The Charter is important to address challenges the community have with government planning processes, and the challenges governments have with managing community expectations about involvement in planning decisions.

In the past, the only time people would realise how planning affected them was when a new house, shed or shopping centre was built near them, or trees were removed. They didn’t know about the decisions that made these developments possible. We are hoping to change this by putting people at the front end of Planning – so communities’ hopes and expectations for the places they live will help set the direction for how these areas will grow and build in the future.

The Charter will build an understanding of the planning system with the public, with an engagement framework that is robust and adaptable and is based on evidence of what works in effectively engaging with people in our communities.

## A new Planning System

The Charter will be a part of a whole new planning system in South Australia, which will change the way we plan our state and the communities we live in. This new system is reflected in the *Planning Development and Infrastructure Act 2016* (the Act). The Act introduces a number of new elements for planning in SA which are discussed below.

### State Planning Policies

The Planning, Development and Infrastructure Act 2016 (the Act) enables the preparation of State Planning Policies (SPPs) that collectively define the high level priorities of the state. In turn, these policies will inform Regional Plans and the Planning and Design Code, renewing our neighbourhoods and creating vibrant, safe, healthy and affordable suburbs and places we want to live, work, study and invest in.

The Act mandates a number of SPPs that are considered necessary for the sustainable development of the state including:

- A Design Quality Policy to specify design policies and principles that are to be applied in other instruments such as the Code.
- An Integrated Planning Policy that specifies policies and principles to encourage integrated land use, transport and infrastructure planning.
- An Adaptive Re-use Policy that specifies policies and principles to encourage and support the adaptive reuse of buildings.
- A Climate Change Policy that specifies policies and principles that seek to minimise adverse effects of planning and development decisions on the climate and promoting development that is resilient to climate change.
- A Special Legislative Scheme Policy that establishes policies relating to any declared special legislative scheme, a character preservation law and the following Acts:
  - The River Murray Act 2003
  - The Adelaide Dolphin Sanctuary Act 2005
  - The Marine Parks Act 2007
  - The Arkaroola Protection Act 2012
  - Character Preservation Areas.

### The Charter and State Planning Policies

The Charter will have a pivotal role in the development of State Planning Policies. It will be important that the Charter provides direction about how communities are engaged around the development of and any future changes to these policies – to determine the long term, sustainable future of South Australia.

It will be important to consider how the Charter can help government talk to communities about State Planning Policies. How important are they to communities, and how might people want to be engaged in their development?

## Regional Plans

The new Act provides for South Australia to be divided into planning regions by the Governor, with one region designated as Greater Adelaide. This allows regional areas to be clearly defined so collaborative arrangements can be established for planning.

It is expected that all of the planning regions will be based upon the existing Local Government boundaries, although adjustment to align with other service delivery boundaries will be considered.

Regional Plans may be divided into parts relating to sub-regions and may include structure plans, master plans, concept plans or other similar documents. Groups of councils will be allowed to join together in a long-term agreement with the Minister to establish a Joint Planning Board which play an important role in Regional Planning.

The Commission will prepare a Regional Plan for each designated planning region, in partnership with the relevant Joint Planning Board, if one has been established.

## The Charter and Regional Planning

How we manage growth and change in our regions is vitally important. The Charter needs to allow communities the potential to shape development in your area and consider how your region 'looks and feels'. It will be important for the Charter to allow people the opportunity to consider what infrastructure investment occurs in a region, as well as the community services provided in that region.

## Planning and Design Code

The new Planning and Design Code (the Code) will introduce a fresh approach to the drafting, presentation and interpretation of zoning rules. It will be based on a consistent, performance-based suite of zones that focuses on built form and mixed use development.

The Commission will be responsible for preparing and maintaining the Code in consultation with councils, industry and communities, and in accordance with the Community Engagement Charter.

The Code will set out a comprehensive set of planning rules for development assessment purposes, classified into zones, subzones and overlays. These new rules will incorporate planning objectives from state, regional and local levels, as well as updated policies for assessing all forms of new development. This will make the Code a clear, single reference point for any development assessment.

The following principles will shape the content of the Code:

- zones will govern the basic use and form of an area
- subzones will be able to include additional rules relating to local or special character
- overlays will allow common issues that may apply across different zones and subzones to be addressed (e.g. flood or bushfire risk)
- specified provisions within the Code will be able to be adapted or modified within pre-determined parameters if agreed by the Minister
- the ability to include performance requirements and design techniques
- use classes and land use definitions will be incorporated in the Code
- will clearly identify the assessment pathways linked to public notification requirements.

The Code will contain a register of local heritage and significant trees based on the same provisions as the current Act.

The new Act will transform the complexity of planning rules which currently exasperate ordinary South Australians trying to build a house, or businesses wanting to deliver a development by replacing them with a single, easy-to-access set of rules that can be applied consistently across the State.

The new rulebook - the Planning and Design Code - will be written in plain language, and will focus on performance outcomes and acceptable solutions that can be tailored to address local circumstances.

### The Charter and the Planning & Design Code

The Planning and Design Code can't be introduced without first undertaking significant consultation with all stakeholders. Establishing consistent zoning rules will require support in the form of policy change, which will need to be aligned with the Charter. Careful consideration must be given to the potential impacts on specific local areas in order to provide certainty to the community and planning practitioners alike.

### Infrastructure Schemes

The Act provides for innovative tools that enable new infrastructure to be delivered to our communities through a fair and transparent process.

These tools spread the costs fairly among the beneficiaries and most importantly, will help to renew our neighbourhoods and create the vibrant, safe, healthy and affordable suburbs and places we want to live, work, study and invest in.

The Basic and General Infrastructure Schemes are new financial tools which will supplement existing arrangements such as planning conditions, deeds and bonding arrangements. They will be used to ensure the infrastructure needed to support new developments, suburban infill or the renewal of neighbourhoods and suburbs is identified, committed, costed and funded beforehand and delivered when and where it is needed.

These schemes can be used to unlock new growth areas on the fringe and replace the need for numerous infrastructure agreements with individual landowners, which is a slow and complex process to administer.

### The Charter and Infrastructure Schemes

It will be very important that the Charter provides some direction for how the community should be engaged in the creation of Infrastructure Schemes, as these will aim to unlock community funding for specific investment.

### Assessment and Development Applications

The Act specifically states that the assessment of development applications are not subject to the Charter. This decision was taken in the context of the entire new planning system to ensure there is confidence in investment and growth in SA while minimizing appeals and delays. It is important to note that development assessment will be undertaken in the context of State Planning Policies, Regional Plans and the Planning Design Code – all of which the Charter has a vital role in.

## What are the principles of good community engagement?

Common sense, our own experience and a wealth of community engagement research shows that good community engagement involves members of the community and other stakeholders **early** and in a way which gives them a **genuine** opportunity to be informed, involved or empowered in making recommendations and decisions.

The challenge is finding the best ways to genuinely engage people - there is no one model that works every time, in every circumstance, and this is what will make the process of developing a Community Engagement Charter interesting!

You may hear people say – ‘we should always use citizens’ juries’ or ‘we should never use citizens’ juries’, or ‘we should always run town hall meetings’ or ‘we should only work with stakeholders’ or ‘we just need to make sure we communicate information effectively’...The reality is that there is no one engagement process that is right for every circumstance as every circumstance is different. Different communities are affected, there are different stakeholders involved, the problem or opportunity is different, as is the political environment.

However, there are some principles that apply no matter the topic, the community or the circumstances.

Helpfully, the South Australian State Government has a set of principles for best practice community engagement called “*Better Together – Principles of Engagement*” and you can find this document at - <http://bettertogether.sa.gov.au/principles-of-engagement> 

We recommend Planning Together Panel members download the handbook and have a close read as it provides a useful starting point for your deliberations and we think it will help you in developing your ideas.

These principles build on, and provide South Australian context for, an internationally used and recognised framework for community engagement – the International Association for Public Participation (IAP2) Public Participation Spectrum:

## IAP2's Public Participation Spectrum



The IAP2 Federation has developed the Spectrum to help groups define the public's role in any public participation process. The IAP2 Spectrum is quickly becoming an international standard.

		INCREASING IMPACT ON THE DECISION				
		INFORM	CONSULT	INVOLVE	COLLABORATE	EMPOWER
Public Participation Goal		To provide the public with balanced and objective information to assist them in understanding the problem, alternatives, opportunities and/or solutions.	To obtain public feedback on analysis, alternatives and/or decisions.	To work directly with the public throughout the process to ensure that public concerns and aspirations are consistently understood and considered.	To partner with the public in each aspect of the decision including the development of alternatives and the identification of the preferred solution.	To place final decision making in the hands of the public.
	Promise to the Public	We will keep you informed.	We will keep you informed, listen to and acknowledge concerns and aspirations, and provide feedback on how public input influenced the decision. We will seek your feedback on drafts and proposals.	We will work with you to ensure that your concerns and aspirations are directly reflected in the alternatives developed and provide feedback on how public input influenced the decision.	We will work together with you to formulate solutions and incorporate your advice and recommendations into the decisions to the maximum extent possible.	We will implement what you decide.

Within the spectrum, the levels of 'Involve', 'Collaborate' and 'Empower' levels are considered best practice in community engagement. Research shows that they are likely to be the most successful – it's human nature - the more we're involved in something, the more we 'own' it and the more likely we are going to be to support it, now and into the future.

*When we involve, collaborate with, and empower people, true innovation happens. The more diverse the people we engage with are, the more likely we are to develop even more innovative approaches or solutions to complex problems.*

This is why the State Government's *Better Together* policy is focused on the Involve, Collaborate and Empower levels of public participation and why we are seeing major planning projects, both in Australia and overseas, starting to involve people to a greater extent. You can see some good examples later in the Guide.

*How well have you been engaged by government on a community issue of importance to you?*

## What is good community engagement in practice?

Now that you've read a little about community engagement **principles** we'd like to share some of the many examples of innovative and experimental community engagement **practice** in Planning from Australia and around the world.

We know that in nearly every local, State or national jurisdiction in Australia, people and community groups are demanding involvement and influence in planning decisions, and the decision makers are exploring and designing new and innovative approaches to meet community expectations.

This section of the Guide showcases some of these practices which include:

**Community Centred Influence** – approaches that 'hard-wire' community groups into decision points along the planning process (i.e. community reference groups)

**Deliberative democracy** – consensus building approaches that put decision making largely in the hands of everyday people using information and evidence

Large Scale Civic Conversations - bringing large and diverse sectors of the community together to consider long term planning matters and visions (i.e. 30 year plans)

**Visualisations** – the use of IT and audio/visual to help people visualise planning concepts and design

**Design Testing** – prototyping and testing planning and design – to better understand impacts, implications and options

You can see how each of these types of approaches fits on the IAP2 Spectrum mentioned in the previous section:

*What works well for you and your community?*

*Do you know of other good community engagement practices?*

	<b>INFORM</b>	<b>CONSULT</b>	<b>INVOLVE</b>	<b>COLLABORATE</b>	<b>EMPOWER</b>
Large scale civic Conversations					
Visualisations					
Design Testing					
Community Centred Influence					
Deliberative Democracy					



## Deliberative Democracy

Deliberative Democracy sits at the 'collaborate' and 'empower' end of the IAP2 Spectrum, and is a community engagement practice which puts influence and decision making largely in the hands of the public.

As Janette Hartz-Karp (a Professor in the field from Curtin University in WA) describes it, *'Deliberative Democracy gives the public the opportunity to discuss public issues and form opinions, it gives democratically elected leaders much better insight into public issues than elections are able to do, and it enables people to justify their views so we can sort out the better from the worse'*.

In South Australia, the government see Deliberative Democracy as a way to develop policy and respond to complex issues, and have developed a policy position on Deliberative Democracy – called 'Reforming Democracy'. <https://yoursay.sa.gov.au/reforming-democracy> 

Some elements of deliberative democracy set it apart from more traditional community engagement or consultation and these are:

<b>Random selection</b>	Participants are representative of the population – and chosen to maximise diversity. Participants are usually selected using random sampling techniques which replicate census data for the community in which the sample is undertaken. People's views on a topic are never known until they walk into the room to begin deliberations – however selection can be undertaken to uncover a breadth of experience of knowledge about a topic.
<b>Evidence consideration</b>	Participants need to thoroughly understand the issues and their implications. Deliberative democracy is founded on the principles of informed judgement, so it is an imperative of deliberative democracy practice that people are given access to all relevant information from all sources – in an attempt to arrive at the most useful/beneficial outcomes. One of the principles of deliberative democracy outlines the importance of people choosing evidence from sources which they trust.
<b>Stakeholder involvement</b>	People support the systems they help to create – this is true for stakeholders as well as for community. Stakeholders are often those who can either "back" or "block" a proposal, and they always have lots of information to offer – so it is a requirement that they are involved in deliberative democracy.
<b>Different views</b>	Participants are encouraged to 'truly deliberate' – understanding people's differing views, values and perspectives in a way which helps them to consider these and also their own position on the matter. This is beyond 'having your say' and moves into a deliberative dialogue – where people come together and listen, share and understand
<b>Consensus making – search for common ground</b>	Deliberative democratic processes always seek to get consensus on recommendations. This can be fostered by the facilitated processes which are used to support consensus, but it also relies heavily on the process being designed to explore many solutions to problems or issues. Deliberative democracy does not work when it seeks a Yes/No answer.
<b>Influence</b>	Deliberative Democracy processes always have greater capacity to influence outcomes and decisions – given their 'deep dive' into issues (through their exposure to information, experience and different views) it is essential that these processes are elevated to a greater degree of influence than other traditional community engagement techniques.

There are significant innovations occurring in deliberative democracy in Australia and around the world, and some governments even changing their own structures to embrace deliberative practice to become a normal part of their policy making. Some examples of deliberative democracy used in Australia and around the world include:

### Planning Together Panel – Development of the Community Engagement Charter on Planning Reform

This panel itself is a deliberative democracy approach – which has been custom designed with elements of a ‘design charrette’ and elements of a ‘deliberative panel’. Design charettes bring together place makers, designers, architects and community –and are usually used to develop design responses to community building. Deliberative panels also do the same, but expand into more broad stakeholder groups (including government, business and not for profit organisations) – where the group do less technical design, but deliberate and make recommendations on particular topics. The Planning Together Panel is SA’s first foray into deliberative democracy from a planning perspective.

### Citizens Jury – Sharing the Roads Safely

In 2013, under enormous public pressure to resolve the tensions between cyclists and motorists, the Premier launched and ran a citizens jury to deliberate on the question “How can we share the roads safely”? The Jury of approximately 40 randomly selected citizens (from within a 15km radius of Adelaide’s Town Hall) met for 4 days over a month. The Jury chose their own witnesses and were supported by witnesses curated by government – and came out with a suite of recommendations, some which have recently been legislated (1m passing law, cycling on footpaths) and others which have become key initiatives/programs for government and also support agencies (i.e. the Motor Accident Commission). A number of citizens juries have been conducted in SA in recent years – and in Victoria in 2016 a split jury was held in regional and metropolitan Victoria to determine infrastructure priorities.

<https://yoursay.sa.gov.au/decisions/sharing-our-roads-safely/outcome> 

<http://yoursay.infrastructurevictoria.com.au/30-year-strategy/citizen-jury> 

### Dialogue with a City – Perth WA

In 2003, 1,100 citizens met in Perth, WA in a deliberative forum to support the city council to develop a planning strategy to make it the “worlds’ most livable city by 2030”. The Perth community were provided with information in the months leading up to the summit and supported through facilitation to develop strategies and approaches which would assist in achieving the goal. These strategies continue to be implemented by government today.

<http://participedia.net/en/cases/dialogue-city> 

### Listening to the City – New York

In response to the terrorist attacks on the World Trade Centre in 2001, a gathering was held of 4,500 people to consider the future of New York City – and the rebuilding of Ground Zero. This huge undertaking was held using a modified 21<sup>st</sup> Century Town Meeting approach supported by online deliberations and dialogue and a commitment and process to ensure follow-up. The dialogue itself was facilitated – and consisted of multiple round table conversations of 10-12 people – with ideas and responses working their way up to large scale consideration and consensus.

<http://participedia.net/en/cases/listening-city> 

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rJBgTFm8ZPQ> 

### Deliberative Polling

As described on Participedia, Deliberative Polling is ‘a unique form of political consultation that combines techniques of public opinion research and public deliberation to construct hypothetical representations of what public opinion on a particular issue might look like if citizens were given a chance to become more informed’. As a polling method, the Deliberative Poll seeks to account for the preferences and opinions of citizens both before and after they have had an opportunity to arrive at considered judgements based on information and exposure to the views of fellow citizens. Deliberative polls have been used in China (to make budgetary recommendations on infrastructure spend), Northern Ireland (to consider the future of education) and Belgium (Euro-Polis) to consider responses to climate change and immigration.

<http://participedia.net/en/methods/deliberative-polling> 

### Participatory Budgeting

Participatory Budgeting (or PB) is a tool to support citizens and community in making important decisions about how money is spent, or how it is saved. PB is widely used around the world, and is a way of assisting people to not only consider priorities but also to consider trade-offs and consequences of investment spends. PB is a useful tool to use as part of a broader deliberative process – and requires relevant data and information to be available. In SA, the government is using PB as a form of crowd funding – letting people decide how some funding should be allocated.

<http://fmc.yoursay.sa.gov.au/participatory-budgeting> 

## Large scale civic conversations

Strategic planning affects everything from where we live and work, to how we get around, and our environmental impact. It requires deep understanding of community values and the complex issues that shape our cities and towns.

One way of growing this understanding is to explore these issues through large scale civic conversations with wide participation and diverse contributors. These conversations don't consult on specific policies – like building heights– but instead explore themes like the desired future qualities of a place. They help build community awareness and understanding of the inter-related issues that shape our cities and neighbourhoods, and assist policy makers to understand what is most important to people.

There are many different forms of large scale civic conversations. Some are formalised and run by institutions or governments. Others are grass-roots and organic. Most succeed through expanding their conversation with strong social media presence and networks. Some examples of large scale conversations are described below.

### SA's Strategic Plan

Widely regarded as an exceptional program, the engagement process for the update of South Australia's Strategic Plan (SASP) was recognised internationally. The SASP engagement process was unique at the time for its integration of face-to-face community engagement methodologies with online discussion and debate on multiple platforms – including extensive use of different social media platforms and on the government's own post moderated engagement discussion forum – Your SAY. The SASP process introduced / started the government's Your Say site and it continues on to this day as a post moderated forum for use by the whole of government.

Features of the SASP engagement process included:

- Very clear agreement from Cabinet and Senior Management Council about the objectives of the engagement process and how the results would be used. This was communicated clearly to the community and stakeholders and regularly repeated.
- Different levels of engagement and types of engagement for different groups. NGO's and business were heavily involved in the early stages of process design and in promotion / advertisement of the engagement process – they were then heavily involved in exploring the key priorities identified by the community and how to measure those areas.
- 60 meetings (more than half of these in regional areas) were held state-wide, involving thousands of South Australians in discussions about their vision for the future.
- Transparency – the reports from all consultation sessions were posted online and participants were invited to check the summary, and add further thoughts or discuss further. This opportunity was also open to anyone in the community.
- An online survey to survey was used to broaden the reach of the engagement process.
- A process with schools to involve students in an online discussion with the Minister for Education.
- An extensive outreach process – designed to reach groups who don't typically engage in advertised face to face meetings. This focused on recent migrants, refugees, Aboriginal communities and leaders, young mothers and young people.
- There was a specific initiative to engage preschool and primary school children through the use of art.

## TedX Talks

TedX talks are locally organized events modelled on the global TED conferences. They are designed to spark deep conversation and connections at a local level. TedX events are always multi-topical and multidisciplinary and are based around a series of inspirational and provocative short talks.

Adelaide has hosted numerous TedX events, including Metamorphosis in 2016. Attracting over 800 people, this event included talks and performances from leaders, artists, entrepreneurs and community activists all celebrating the challenge of change in our city and beyond. The City 2.0 event held in 2012 explored a range of issues relating to urban policy, green infrastructure, place-making, transport, and participatory engagement, and contributed to a rich public conversation in parallel to the planning reform that was occurring at the time.

<http://tedxadelaide.com.au> 

## Pecha Kucha – ‘Greenest City in the World’

Like TedX, ‘Pecha Kucha’ engages communities in civic conversations about topical issues with over 900 events held world-wide since 2003. Pecha Kucha – ‘the art of concise conversation’ - is a set format of speakers presenting 20 slides for 20 seconds. In 2010, the City of Vancouver hosted a Pecha Kucha event to launch its ‘Greenest City in the World 2020 vision’. With over 2000 participants, this event is reported to be the largest attendance of any engagement event held by the City of Vancouver, and introduced new people and demographics into the conversation.

<https://www.planetizen.com/node/67656> 

<http://www.mayorofvancouver.ca/mayor-invites-public-to-dynamic-presentations-about-shaping-vancouver%25e2%2580%2599s-future-as-the-greenest-city> 

## The Bays Precinct Sydneysiders Summit

The ‘Bays Precinct Sydneysiders Summit’ was a free public event, open to all and aimed at building public knowledge and participation in the transformation of The Bays Precinct in Sydney. More than 1,300 attendees learned about the ambition, objectives and possibilities for the transformation of The Bays Precinct and provided their initial feedback at the two-day Summit held in 2015. Another 500 people watched live-streamed presentations online.

The dramatic heritage setting of the Technology Park exhibition building at Eveleigh provided a stimulating, immersive, and exciting space for exhibitions, talks, and events during the summit.

The conversations and contributions made at the Summit have influenced the Bays Urban Transformation Plan which is guiding the long-term strategic planning and development of the significant harbour-front sites.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TvMQ2zUPGYg&index=11&list=PLOTzTAlmSYsjiatSMKfhKAIWLNybgmca> 

### Questions to consider

What needs to happen to better use large scale civic conversations for specific planning policy or projects?

How do we consider the size and scale of the engagement, in relation to the size and scale of the planning issue?

How would we make sure civic conversations are accessible to a wide cross-section of the community?

## Visualisations

In strategic planning and design, 'visualisations' are a range of graphic techniques used to illustrate future changes to the built environment. They can help make abstract concepts or technical documents, such as planning policy or development controls, more tangible and understandable to people from all walks of life. They are a tool where a person can 'see for themselves'.

The style and purpose of visualisations varies widely. They can show overall concepts like possible future building massing, or very detailed elements such as individual buildings or new streetscapes. Familiar types of visualisations include 'artist impression' sketches, physical models, or photo-realistic computer generated montages showing new development super-imposed onto a photo of an existing place.

Access to emerging technologies provides opportunities for more sophisticated and effective visualization techniques. 3-dimensional computer modelling and visualisation tools such as Google Earth, Sketchup, and Streetview, provide simple tools available to anyone. New and emerging technologies such as virtual reality (VR) or augmented reality (AR) provide a much more immersive experience than conventional illustrations.

An emerging area of urban planning and engagement is the 'intelligent' interactive modelling platforms using GIS (Global Information Systems) that enable real-time exploration of alternate planning approaches and their corresponding impacts (such as traffic, or energy use). These tools can be enormously expensive to develop and maintain.

Some examples of visualization and urban planning engagement are described below.

### Physical Models: City of Sydney

Physical models are a very simple way of showing the built form of new development and the relationship to existing context. The City of Sydney requires all new development applications to submit a model of proposed buildings for inclusion in their large-scale city model. Existing and proposed buildings are colour-coded to clearly illustrate the changing skyline.

This model is very effective at showing development proposals in context but does not illustrate wider planning policy or describe the 'look and feel' of a place.

<https://www.sydneycustomshouse.com.au/visit/city-model> 

### Photomontages: Inner Metro Rim Structure Plan (DPTI 2012)

The 'Inner Metro Rim Structure Plan' (2012) was part of the 30 Year Plan for Greater Adelaide (2011) which prioritised increasing residential densities close to the City. The Plan identified specific opportunities for future development and described the desired and / or possible changes to inner-metropolitan neighbourhoods and ultimately assisted with re-zoning through various Development Plan Amendments.

Photomontages were used to show 'before and after' scenarios for key streetscapes within affected areas. Images of possible developments provided tangible representation of policy directions as well as a range of things not directly controlled by the planning policy, such as new landscape, detailed building design, and outdoor dining, potentially raising community expectations.

[http://www.saplanningportal.sa.gov.au/\\_data/assets/pdf\\_file/0003/283089/IMR\\_05032013.pdf](http://www.saplanningportal.sa.gov.au/_data/assets/pdf_file/0003/283089/IMR_05032013.pdf) 

### CitySwipe ('Tinder for Cities')

CitySwipe is an urban engagement tool based on the dating app 'Tinder'. Being trialed by Downtown Santa Monica in the US, it allows people to swipe left or right to indicate a response to anything from park benches to development proposals.

Urban planning issues are often complex and detailed. Whilst apps like CitySwipe might not enable deep consideration of issues, they may expand the reach of conventional practices and engage a different cross-section of the community, including younger 'digital natives'.

<http://www.dtsmcityswipe.com> 

### Virtual Reality / Augmented Reality

Virtual Reality (VR) is widely adopted by the development sector to provide 'virtual walkthroughs' of new developments and provides a highly immersive experience of future designed environments.

Augmented Reality (AR) – where computer generated elements and real-world imagery are combined – provides an immersive experience with greater emphasis of the existing conditions or context. This technology hasn't been widely adopted in urban planning yet, but prototypes such as 'UrbanPlanar – Augmented Reality for Urban Planning' are being developed.

Virtual reality and augmented reality provide opportunities for dynamic experiences of places which include simulation of time, movement, and environmental conditions (such as weather), providing very powerful tools for engagement.

*UrbanPlanar 'Augmented Reality for Urban Planning':*

<https://web.sbe.hw.ac.uk/fbosche/projects-urbanplanar.html> 

### Smart cities + interactive modelling

Global Information Systems (GIS) connect data with geographic locations and provide a powerful tool for visualizing the 'performance' of places (such as energy use or transport). Smart Cities use Information and Communications Technology to utilize this data to make better decisions about planning, infrastructure and management of cities and towns.

Various GIS platforms enable highly interactive participatory planning and engagement which demonstrate the consequences of different planning decisions in real time. One of the leading examples is MIT Media Lab's CityScope project which combines 'intelligent' physical Lego models with digital models.

<https://impactdesignhub.org/2016/09/26/mits-cityscope-project-brings-urban-planning-to-the-people/> 

### Questions to consider

Some visualisations can be very expensive ways of showing what something 'might' look like... what types of engagement are more worthwhile than others? How much should we 'spend' on engagement?

How do we balance raising expectations about an outcome (that can't always be guaranteed)?

Bringing people together to talk face-to-face costs very little, on the other hand, some visualisations can be costly...how might we weigh up the cost vs benefits of different engagement methods?

Do we need to consider the scale and potential impact of a project or policy change when we make decisions about levels of engagement?

## Design Testing

Traditionally, planning comes first, followed by design, followed by development. Contemporary urban planning has recognised the value of including design testing as part of the strategic planning phase to explore alternative possible outcomes. There are two main benefits of this approach. Firstly, it helps define a desired future more clearly, based on evidence and testing of the alternatives demonstrated through tangible examples, and secondly, it assists to make the planning policy consistent with this desired outcome.

Design testing can be 'top-down' in that it tests the implications of a particular plan or development regulations. For example, it might explore what kind of buildings can be achieved under new zoning proposal. Or it can be 'bottom-up', starting with an aspiration, such developing a vision for how a neighbourhood or place could be reimagined. Both approaches provide powerful ways of engaging communities by making abstract ideas tangible, by visualising alternatives, and often by demonstrating the need to balance competing demands or trade-offs.

Design testing can include design competitions, strategic planning processes, grants for speculative design work, or academic research.

### NSW Missing Middle Design Competition (2016)

The Missing Middle Design Competition called on architects and building designers to showcase their visions for the future of medium density housing in NSW. Designers participated in a competitive design-led process to apply and test the draft Medium Density Housing Code and draft Medium Density Design Guide. Over 100 hundred entries were submitted in 3 categories judged by industry experts. The winning entries are to be published and the learnings from the competition will influence the refinement and implementation of the Design Code by the NSW Department of Planning & Environment. This is an interesting example of where a creative process of a design competition is explicitly used to seek feedback on draft regulations.

<http://www.planning.nsw.gov.au/About-Us/Office-of-the-Government-Architect/Design-competition> 

### 5000+ Speculations

'5000+ an Integrated Design Strategy' was a pilot project facilitated by the Integrated Design Commission for the South Australian Government, Adelaide City Council, and seven inner-metropolitan Councils. A key element of the highly collaborative project was the use of design testing to explore possible future scenarios in Adelaide and test the ideas gathered through extensive engagement, as well as inform the evolving planning reform occurring at the time. This included 'Speculations', a grant program that invited collaborative multi-disciplinary design teams to develop provocative visions for key sites and conditions in and around Adelaide. The work of over 100 organisations was subsequently showcased in the popular Collaborative Cities exhibition.

### EMLR Low-Flows Design Competition

The cumulative effect of the thousands of dams and watercourse diversions in the Mount Lofty Ranges in SA was stopping water flowing how it naturally would – it's lengthening the amount of time that parts of the system go without water. To counter the impacts of these system changes, the SA Murray Darling Natural Resources Management Board endorsed as a policy the concept of restoring low flows – diverting trickles of water down the system. However the Board had no predetermined approach for the ways in which to do it, so it conducted a competition where engineers, farmers and innovators from around the world designed ideas – which were all made available under creative commons to the community. Landholders who are required to return low flows as part of their water licence can choose, remix and build on these ideas that best support their needs and develop site specific solutions.

<http://www.naturalresources.sa.gov.au/samurraydarlingbasin/water/low-flows-design-library> 

#### Questions to consider

These speculative design processes are often done by professionals and then displayed to communities. Can there be more opportunities for people to be actively involved?

How do you scale up design testing – so that it encourages innovation and involves many?

What needs to be considered when groups of people with different views come together?

## Example Charter – Planning for People Charter NSW

In 2014 a collection of community organisations worked on and released their ‘Planning for People’ Charter. The writing group included the Better Planning Network, Community Councillors Network, Inner Sydney Regional Council for Social Development, National Parks Association of NSW, National Trust of Australia (NSW), Nature Conservation Council of NSW, NSW Heritage Network, Shelter NSW and the Total Environment Centre.

The Charter is accompanied by a companion document and the group also developed some ideas for how it could be implemented. These documents can be found here:

<https://thecommunitycharter.org/about/> 

### ***Planning for people - A community charter for good planning in NSW***

#### ***Our vision***

*A planning system that thinks of both today and tomorrow; is built on fairness, equity and the concept of Ecologically Sustainable Development; guides quality development to the right places; ensures poorly designed developments and those in the wrong place don't get built; and protects the things that matter, from open spaces, bushland and productive agricultural land to much-loved historic town centres and buildings.*

*Good planning is governed by the following principles:*

- *The well-being of the whole community, the environment and future generations across regional, rural and urban NSW.*
- *Effective and genuine public participation in strategic planning and development decisions.*
- *An open, accessible, transparent and accountable, corruption-free planning system.*
- *The integration of land use planning with the provision of infrastructure and the conservation of our natural, built and cultural environment.*
- *Objective, evidence-based assessment of strategic planning and development proposals.*

*These principles will guide a planning system that:*

- *Respects, values and conserves our natural environment and the services it provides.*
- *Facilitates world-class urban environments with well-designed, resource-efficient housing, public spaces and solar access that meet the needs of residents, workers and pedestrians.*
- *Provides housing choice, including affordable housing and sufficient housing for the disadvantaged, in a diversity of locations.*
- *Celebrates, respects and conserves our cultural (including Aboriginal) and built heritage.*
- *Protects and sustainably manages our natural resources, including our water resources, fragile coastlines and irreplaceable agricultural land for the benefit of present and future generations while maintaining or enhancing ecological processes and biological diversity.*
- *Retains and protects our crown lands, natural areas, landscapes and flora and fauna for the benefit of the people of NSW.*
- *Gives local and regional communities a genuine and meaningful voice in shaping their local area and region, its character and the location, height and density of housing. Provides certainty and fairness to communities.*

**The principles interpreted:**

***The well-being of the whole community, the environment and future generations across regional, rural and urban NSW***

*We call for a planning system that integrates short and long term social, environmental and economic considerations to create lasting benefits for communities, now and in the future. This is the concept of Ecologically Sustainable Development (ESD) as currently defined in the Protection of the Environment Administration Act 1991. ESD must be the overarching objective of the planning system. For more information about ESD refer to the Charter Companion document.*

***Effective and genuine public participation in strategic planning and development decisions***

*Everyone has the right to participate in decisions that affect their lives. People affected by a planning or development proposal have the right, knowledge and experience to contribute to the final decision. The role of planning authorities includes facilitating community input into the preparation of strategic plans prior to public exhibition and genuine, open dialogue between stakeholders. The role of consent authorities is to consider public comments on development proposals and ensure compliance by developers.*

***An open, accessible, transparent and accountable and corruption-free planning system***

*Decision processes must be transparent and accountable. Decisions must be made in public, respond objectively to issues raised in submissions, provide reasons and be subject to the rules of procedural fairness.*

*The community's ability to seek review of a decision is important in preventing corruption and poor decision-making. All information considered when assessing a proposal must be publicly available and accessible prior to the decision being made. So called 'fast-tracking' of development does not benefit the public interest. Anti-corruption measures must be effective and enforceable.*

*Disproportionate influence from vested financial interests has no place in planning decisions. The ability to lobby decision makers is a democratic right. However, it is inappropriate to allow companies, wealthy individuals or lobbyists a greater level of access than is available to the public.*

***The integration of land use planning with the provision of infrastructure and the conservation of our natural, built and cultural environment***

*An integrated approach is the key to achieving the kind of sustainable settlement patterns that are needed now and into the future. This type of approach will allow future planning to maintain the integrity of natural areas, take into account natural hazards and constraints, locate employment and key social infrastructure in accessible locations, and ensure the provision of sustainable infrastructure systems that use less energy and resources.*

***Objective, evidence-based assessment of strategic planning and development proposals***

*The foundation stone of a good planning system is a sound knowledge base that is publicly accessible and is updated and maintained by government in the public interest. The current system in which the developer pays for reports, such as environmental impact statements, creates conflicts of interests. Whilst it is equitable for developers to pay for reports, the objectivity of reports must be ensured by requiring professional standards and keeping the appointment of consultants at arm's length from developers.*

## What's next?

To develop the Charter, we will be working with three key groups that will provide input into preparing the draft which will later be provided to the Commission for their consideration. These groups include:

- **Planning Together Panel** - a randomly selected, statistically representative group of 50 community members that will be tasked with developing the draft Charter. This will entail a facilitated and deliberative program, working closely with representatives from the planning sector and other groups with an interest in planning. This group will meet for four full days over two weekends (1-2 July and 29-30 July 2017).
- **Practitioner Group** - a hand-selected group of senior planning professionals (encompassing local and state government, peak bodies and consultants) tasked with providing industry perspective and context for the Panel and ensuring the Charter's decision-making framework is relevant and practical in a strategic planning policy setting. This group will meet prior to the first Panel session and once between the panel weekends (and maybe other times, as agreed).
- **Broader Stakeholder Group** - includes planning practitioners, and groups and individuals with an interest in the planning system (up to 50 people), who will be engaged to contribute their knowledge and experience of the planning system the Panel discussions.

Input from the broader public will also be sought at various stages in the Charter's development via [yourSAy.sa.gov.au](http://yourSAy.sa.gov.au) and through [saplanningportal.sa.gov.au](http://saplanningportal.sa.gov.au).

Once the Charter has been developed, it will need to be endorsed by the Commission. The Charter may then be adopted by the Minister for Planning.

## Any other questions or comments?

If you'd like to know more about the South Australian planning reform or the development of the Community Engagement Charter, please contact Anya Hart (DPTI) at [anya.hart@sa.gov.au](mailto:anya.hart@sa.gov.au).

If you have questions about the Planning Together Panel, please contact Vivienne Lambert (democracyCo) on [vivienne@democracyco.com.au](mailto:vivienne@democracyco.com.au).