

CLOSING THE GAP

ENGAGING WITH ABORIGINAL AND

TORRES STRAIT ISLANDER AUSTRALIANS



The engagement spectrum

Engagement is not a single process or set of activities. It is an ongoing process or conversation that builds trust and relationships.

The type of engagement activity used will depend on the nature of the program, policy or activity being developed or implemented, and the level and type of involvement with Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander Australians.

There are five broad categories encompassing different levels of engagement and the corresponding types of involvement being sought. These levels create a spectrum of engagement.

Inform

Informing will provide:

- communities with factual information
- information to assist communities to understand a problem, a policy and alternatives, and to look to opportunities and/or solutions
- outcomes of a process and/or decisions taken, why they were taken and the intended benefits
- information on a process and opportunities for engagement.

Consult

Consulting with community is a means of obtaining feedback from communities through clearly defined channels. Consulting can help guide the development of policies and programs, analysis, alternatives and/or decisions. It is also about listening to concerns and aspirations, and gathering information.

Involve

Involve communities by working directly with them through processes to ensure there is common understanding of the issue and that community views, concerns and aspirations are reflected in the development of options or approaches. Involving is a two way exchange of information that encourages discussion and provides an opportunity to influence the outcome.

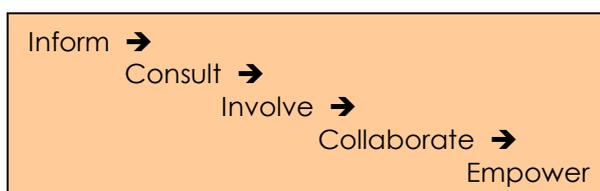
Collaborate

Collaboration is working in partnership with communities as a team, incorporating their input and advice, jointly formulating solutions and/or options, and sharing agenda setting and deliberation of issues.

Empower

Empowering is about placing final decision-making in the hands of the community - the community decides what will be implemented.

The engagement spectrum¹



Other information sheets in the series

- *Issues to keep in mind – Part 1 Cultural awareness*
- *Issues to keep in mind – Part 2 Visiting communities*
- *Steps for engaging effectively to work together and build productive partnerships*
- *What are the principles underpinning effective engagement?*
- *What is good engagement?*

¹ Adapted from the IAP2's Public Participation Spectrum.