



Australian Government

Department of Industry,
Innovation and Science

Hidden in Plain Sight:

Building an understanding of how the Australian Public Service can unlock community expertise to improve policy, programmes and service delivery.



Discover phase report
Commitment 5.2 of Australia's first
Open Government National Action Plan

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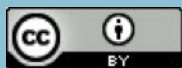
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Executive Summary

Better use of the expertise in the broader community can help address complexity in public policy and enhance confidence in government. The expertise is there and the holders want to contribute. There is a real opportunity to develop more creative and innovative solutions which is not being grasped. It is as if it is right in front of us – hidden in plain sight.

The Australian Public Service (APS) is missing opportunities to develop more innovative and valued solutions to complex public policy problems due to a lack of effective engagement with the expertise available in business, academia and the general community.

For the APS to seize the opportunity, it will require a significant shift in its current thinking and a willingness on the behalf of civil society to set aside some of their scepticism. The building of greater trust and confidence in the relationships between the APS and civil society will be essential. The implementation of an APS wide framework for engagement and participation can raise the awareness of the methods and benefits of engagement, support the fundamentals, and help the APS to think differently.

While there are innovative approaches to public participation being adopted at local and state government level and internationally, there are no universal public participation definitions and approaches, nor any universal framework that could be taken 'off the shelf' and applied in the APS. To help provide a frame for the analysis the report uses the Ontario Provincial government's definitions of engagement and participation:

- **Share** – Does government need to tell the public about a government initiative? People receive information about a government program or decision in an accessible way. Communication is one-way from the government to the public.
- **Consult** – Does government need to gather feedback from the public about a problem? People have an opportunity to weigh-in and provide their input. Participants advocate for their views on a subject.
- **Deliberate** – Does government need help from the public to frame or solve a problem? People help identify the issue and/or develop a strategy that the government commits to deliver. Participants take part in varying degrees to find common ground and collectively arrive at an agreement.
- **Collaborate** – Does government need help from the public to find and implement a solution? People work with government to define an issue, develop and deliver solutions. Participants share decision-making and implementation of solutions.

To understand why the APS does not engage the expertise in the community more readily, the project team conducted user research. We undertook ethnographic user interviews with 38 APS employees from 13 departments/agencies and 37 people from the community from across 29 organisations, including business, industry associations/peak bodies, engagement practitioners, not for profits and academia.

The APS interviews showed that awareness and practical experience of how to engage the community beyond traditional information sharing and consultation approaches is patchy across the APS. Consultation often has an emphasis on obtaining buy in rather than accessing expertise. There is hesitation in applying more deliberative and collaborative approaches, in part due to a perception of risk and a lack of value for the effort required. Sometimes external constraints such as legal or parliamentary processes exclude more open dialogue.



The non APS interviews showed that those in civil society see themselves as having specific expertise with unique and useful perspectives to bring to the table on matters of public policy and that it is in the public interest for them to do so. There is a level of scepticism with the motivations of government engagement. The community is pragmatic and realistic, they are aware of and appreciate some of the constraints that public servants face.

The insights from the user research were supported by the findings of a stocktake of current engagement practices across thirteen APS departments. While the APS engages the public in a wide variety of ways, the majority of engagement practices focus on information sharing and consultation. Many of the practices, such as submissions processes and feedback mechanisms, were transactional in nature and did not engender a sense of valuing an ongoing relationship with the community. The majority of the respondents cited the 'authorising environment' as a recurring barrier, which prevented more meaningful consultation with the public. Respondents also identified a number of areas of improvement in order to build ongoing relationship with the public.

The research suggests that the potential rewards from more effective engagement with the community are significant. It is also clear that an APS wide framework can support better engagement if it is designed in a way that

addresses: the different methods and tools of good engagement; the value of meaningful engagement with the public, helps public servants choose the right way to engage for the issue they have; helps them navigate internal processes and think differently about their role and the role of community expertise.

The insights generated from the research have identified a number of challenges faced by people involved in participation and engagement activities. The following design questions transfer these challenges into opportunities for design and will be launch pads for ideas in the create phase.

- How might we help public servants to select the right way to engage the public for the challenge before them?
- How can we assist the APS to see the benefits from engaging the expertise of the community?
- How can we help the APS to get the basics of engagement right?
- How might we re-think critical business processes to better reflect the importance of community expertise?
- How might we re-imagine public servant roles such as policy officer to make better use of community expertise?
- How might we shift incentives to better encourage the development of the skills needed to tap community expertise?

Technology has the potential to remove some of the barriers to better engagement. The research in this report has informed the Business Research and Innovation Initiative (BRII) challenge to develop a platform that digitally enables community engagement in policy, programme and service design. This will continue through the project's Create and Deliver phases with the potential for a platform to form part of the framework.

Every agency in the APS has key stakeholders and different ways of engaging those stakeholders. The research has shown that these relationships can be transactional, made up of a series of single issue interactions. This does not necessarily need to be the case. A quick win from this research could be for department's to assess the nature of the relationship with key stakeholders and to see to the extent possible that they could be move to more of a partnership model.

Introduction to project and this report

In December 2016, the Australian Government announced the first Open Government Partnership National Action Plan. This report forms part of the work under Commitment 5.2 of the action plan which is focussed on enhancing public participation in policy development and service delivery. This section provides an overview of the project, its methodology, and this report. Detailed information is in Appendix A.

Australia's first Open Government National Action Plan

The Open Government Partnership (OGP) is a multi-lateral initiative that aims to secure concrete commitments from governments to advance open government efforts. In November 2015, the Commonwealth Government reaffirmed Australia's commitment to join the OGP. Every two years, OGP members must work with the public to transparently and publicly co-create a National Action Plan. In December 2016, the Commonwealth Government released Australia's first Open Government National Action Plan and its 15 commitments

Implement National Action Plan Commitment 5.2

This project is to implement National Action Plan Commitment 5.2: Enhancing public participation. Commitment 5.2's ambition is for the APS to design and adopt a whole-of-government framework that embeds meaningful, open, public and multi-stakeholder participation into policy development and service delivery.

Milestones and outputs

The Commitment has three key milestones, each with its own outputs. This report is an output of the first milestone. Milestone two is to release the framework itself; and milestone three is to undertake pilot public participation initiatives.

Methodology - User Centred Design

The Project team is implementing Commitment 5.2 using a User Centred Design (UCD) methodology. UCD is a coherent step-by-step problem solving approach. Besides including processes and tools that boost innovation, UCD ensures that users (i.e., the public) are at the centre of our work throughout the Commitment's implementation. This boosts both the quality of our work and its legitimacy.

The UCD methodology has three phases, which align with the three milestones of the Commitment 5.2 - Discover (Milestone 1); Create (Milestone 2); and Deliver (Milestone 3).

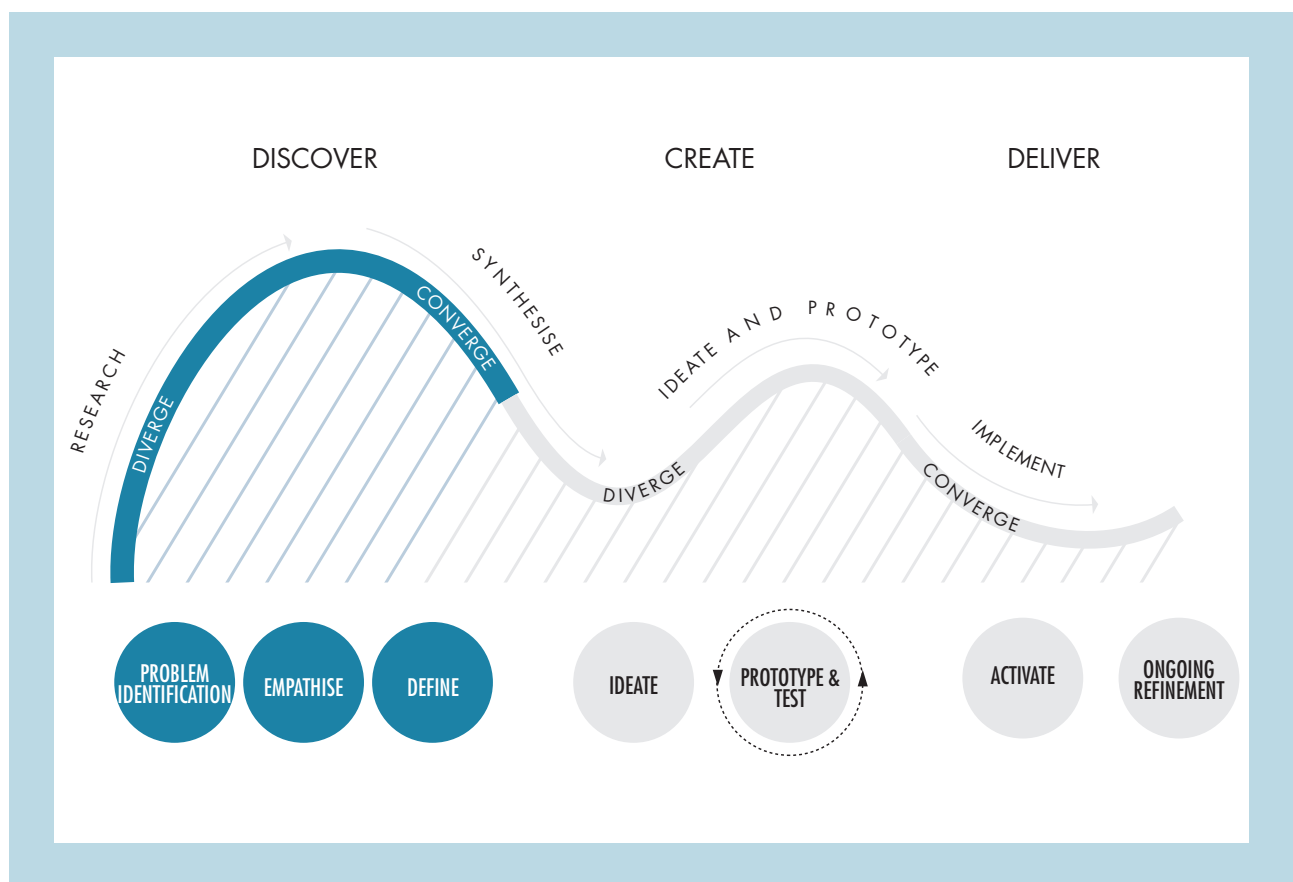


Purpose of this report

This report shows the findings from the Discover phase, which has the following three stages:

- 1. Problem Identification stage** – where we identify the real problem we are trying to solve;
- 2. Empathise stage** – where we explore user needs and motivations, to understand why the problem occurs; and
- 3. Define stage** – where we identify opportunities for solutions

Exhibit: This report covers the Project's Discover phase, including its Problem Identification; Empathise; and Define stages. The future phases focus on developing and implementing solutions, and will be covered in future reports.



Chapter one: What is the problem we're trying to solve?

This chapter argues that public policy problems are increasingly complex and that this complexity is occurring in an environment of declining trust in government. The literature suggests that tapping the expertise from the community can assist with this complexity and also build greater confidence in the decisions of government.

Relative and state of local government jurisdiction the Australian Public Service (APS) is missing opportunities to develop more innovative and valued solutions to complex public policy problems due to a lack of effective engagement with the expertise available in business, academia and the general community.

“

If data and information are the primary resources in a knowledge society, dialogue is the refinery that allows governments, businesses, and civil society to find and extract the value.”

Don Lenihan, Canada 20/20

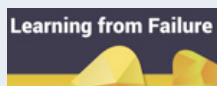
Chapter process overview

The Problem Identification stage of the Discover phase is about defining the real issue we are trying to solve. To do this, the project team reviewed secondary data, including: a literature review of 70 publications; and consultations with 15 experts.

In trying to understand the real issue at play, consideration was given to the nature of the problems facing public servants, the potential for the community to assist, and the role of technology. Different approaches to public participation were assessed and case studies used to illustrate successful examples of how the expertise in the community is currently being applied.

The analysis results in the establishment of the real challenge before the APS and a hypothesis as to why this is the case. It also helps build a shared understanding of what public participation is, and why it matters.

The problems public servants have to solve are daunting



Peter Shergold's '*Learning from Failure*' stresses that the APS's already challenging work is getting more difficult

"The work of government is hard. Its challenges are wicked. Problems do not always have defined boundaries, solutions can (and should) be contested and authority is ambiguous. Political change can occur unexpectedly and at breakneck speed. Administrative change generally takes place in an almost imperceptible fashion but can be transformative in nature.

These challenges are exacerbated by the rapidity and level of scrutiny that is now brought to bear by the 24-hour news cycle, the increasing influence of social media and the 'hyper-connectivity' of community networks enabled by the internet.

Both politicians and public servants must grapple with unrealistic citizen expectations and low levels of public trust."

Public servants want to make a difference through high quality public policy, programmes and services. But we have to navigate a great deal of complexity to achieve this, compounded by declining trust in government.

The APS's work has always been challenging, and is becoming more complex. The APS is frequently confronted with 'wicked problems'—complex policy issues that are highly resistant to resolution. Indigenous disadvantage is a good example of a wicked problem that has proven resistant to solution in spite of ongoing efforts, and requires a concerted effort to identify and address multiple aspects of disadvantage across all levels of government and community. Aspects of health, education, cities and climate change have similar attributes. Obesity provides a good example. If we want to fight obesity, parents must get their children to exercise more. If we want to reduce greenhouse gases, communities must work together to modify local lifestyles. And if we want better apprenticeship programmes and schools, community organisations and businesses may need to team up with government to provide them.¹

Compounding this complexity, the APS is often not in a position to exert direct control over how the policy environment operates and needs the help of non-government actors. The world in which public policy is made is an adaptive system with multiple public and private stakeholders. These stakeholders have differing goals and are constantly both acting and reacting to others within overlapping networks.



¹The description of wicked problems were adapted from Don Lenihan 'A case study of Ontario's Condominium Act Review', Canada's Public Policy Forum, 2014.

²Ronald Heifetz 'Leadership without easy answers', Harvard University Press, 1998.

In the language of Harvard academic Ronald Heifetz, these complex problems are ‘adaptive challenges’ that require innovation and learning to address, as opposed to technical problems that can be solved by expertise and good management.²

Moreover, the APS needs to undertake its work against a backdrop of declining trust. Recent studies show trust in government at record lows.³ For example, a 2016 survey of 1444 Australians reported:

- Satisfaction with democracy at its lowest since 1996; and
- Levels of trust in government and politicians in Australia are at their lowest level since 1993, with only 5% of Australians trusting government.⁴

Similarly, the Edelman Trust Barometer’s Australian Trust findings showed a dip in trust in government in 2016, falling from 45% to 37% among the general population.⁵ The Australian National University’s

Trends in Australian Political Opinion poll found that after the 2016 election, 40% of respondents were not satisfied with democracy in Australia – the lowest level since the dismissal of Prime Minister Whitlam in the 1970s. Moreover, only 26% of people thought the government could be trusted, the lowest level since the poll began this measure in 1969.⁶

Lack of trust in government isn’t unique to Australia. For example, an OECD study indicates that only four out of ten citizens in OECD countries say they have confidence in their national authorities.⁷

The declining trust in government has implications for both the APS’s ability to communicate ideas to the broader public and build public confidence in its work.



³Surveys and studies include:

- New Democracy ‘A case for change and support for citizen juries – Results from The Pulse, March 2017’ which found that the ‘current system of government is broken...[in part due to] complexity of issues’;
- Grattan Institute’s ‘Trends in Australian industry’ presentation to the Department of Industry, Innovation and Science, which found that ‘Minor party vote jumped in Australia in 2013 and continues to increase’ and that ‘Distrust of government is increasing’.
- That presentation drew on the Scanlon Foundation’s 2016 survey ‘Mapping social cohesion’ which had findings suggesting a growing lack of trust in the political system and that more Australians want our system of government to change.

⁴Mark Evans, Gerry Stoker, Max Halupka ‘Now for the big question: who do you trust to run the country?’ The Conversation, May 2016.

⁵Steven Spurr ‘Trust free-falls in the land down under’ Edelman Barometer Research Insight <http://www.edelman.com/post/trust-free-falls-in-the-land-down-under/>.

⁶Gabrielle Chan ‘Trump-style political disaffection taking hold in Australia, review says’, The Guardian, 2017. Original survey data the article draws on is here: <http://australianelectionstudy.org/>.

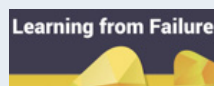
⁷E. Allan Lind and Christiane Arndt ‘Perceived fairness and regulatory policy: A behavioural science perspective on government-citizen interactions, OECD, 2016.

Bringing the public into our work can help

Senior public servants and academics argue that the APS can reduce the complexity and build trust by bringing more people and expertise into its work when they are needed. Their view is that there is a great deal of untapped information the APS misses using current approaches to involving the public in its work.⁸ Better approaches might allow the APS to translate the best technical, academic and practical advice into accessible, policy and programme relevant conclusions.

For example, Martin Parkinson, Secretary of the Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet, has advocated using more community expertise in the APS' work. Noting that 'no one person or organisation has all the answers', Parkinson's view is that 'creating 'policy communities' of those who are making policy, those implementing policy on the ground or those working in think tanks, enables us to be constantly environment scanning, allowing us to see earlier and more clearly the opportunities for better outcomes, as well as identifying the emerging or inherent risks in our approaches. Such communities would allow lessons to feed back into the policy process and create constituencies for positive change.'⁹

Peter Shergold's 'Learning from Failure' review also supports more citizen involvement in policy and programmes. It found that '[t]he APS should promote new forms of civil participation, including digital and deliberative democracy techniques, in order to enhance consumer-directed care, improve customer service, encourage greater citizen engagement and inform the public economy... real solutions to complex issues not only require that stakeholders, citizens and communities be fully involved in the policy process; they require genuine collaboration between governments and the public.'¹⁰



**Peter Shergold's
'Learning from
Failure' contends**

**that public servants will need to be
facilitators of 'adaptive government'
– partnering with others to deliver
government agendas**

"Public servants cannot seek to be controllers... [They must] exercise their responsibility on the basis of collaboration and partnership, working cooperatively across sectors to inform and deliver a government's agenda.

They need to see themselves as the stewards of democratic processes and good governance. The leadership they provide needs to be facilitative in nature. Their performance should be assessed on their ability to effectively harness ideas and capabilities from across and outside of government, not on their ability to control and orchestrate every minor activity."

⁸See for example, John Seely Brown, Lang Davison 'The power of pull: How small moves, smartly made, can set big things in motion' Basic Books, 2012.

⁹Martin Parkinson 'Address to the Australasian Implementation Conference', 2016. <https://www.dpmc.gov.au/news-centre/pmc/address-australasian-implementation-conference>.

¹⁰Peter Shergold 'Learning from failure: Why large government policy initiative have gone so badly wrong in the past and how the chances of success can be improved' <http://www.apsc.gov.au/publications-and-media/current-publications/learning-from-failure>.



**Professor Beth Noveck's
'Smart Citizens, Smarter
State' argues that
the public's supply
of expertise is not
being matched to demand for it in
government**

"Governing institutions make far too little of the skills and experience of those inside and outside of government with scientific credentials, practical skills, and ground-level street smarts. More flexible and responsive approaches that tap into an array of expertise are needed."

Gordon de Brouwer, former Secretary of the Department of the Environment and Energy, believes better engagement is essential to positioning the APS for the future. In his Secretary Valedictory speech, he argues that the APS serves the public best when, among other things, it 'work[s] through solutions together and with key people outside the public service'. Further, he suggests that the APS change its attitude to engagement – thinking of the public as insiders in public policy, rather than as outsiders to be managed. He also suggests that it change its engagement practices. He says 'we need to talk like normal people to each other and the public' and '[trust] comes down to how we talk with the public, how we treat them, and how we ensure that we provide, rationally and without advocacy, the information they want and need to make informed judgments and decisions.'¹¹

Academics and think tanks echo these views. In her book 'Smart Citizens, Smarter State', Professor Beth Noveck, director of New York University's governance lab, argues that current approaches to decisionmaking are not well equipped to respond to the increasing complexity and public expectations of public policy. Offering a far-reaching program for innovation, she suggests that public decision making could be more effective and legitimate if government were smarter—if our institutions knew how to use technology to leverage citizens' expertise.¹²

Public administration academics Tina Nabatchi and Matt Leighninger have a similar view, stating 'Our current participation infrastructure occupies a great deal of time, money, and political capital, but it is inefficient, ineffective, and outdated. It does not support 'good' participation, does not meet the needs of citizens or officials, and does not reflect the way people live today.'¹³

Most academics are not suggesting, however, that public servants need to involve the public in everything they do, even when it is not practical. For example, Reeve Bull in 'Making the Administrative State Safe for Democracy' says that 'to the extent that public input is beneficial to administrative decision making it should be sought and considered.' He qualifies this, however, saying '...[public servants] should not seek [public input] out of an unnecessary obeisance to the principles of democracy'.¹⁴



¹¹Gordon de Brouwer 'Secretary Valedictory', Institute of Public Administration Australia, ACT Division, 2017.

¹²Beth Noveck 'Smart citizens, smarter state' Harvard University Press, 2015. A similar publication is John Seely Brown, Lang Davison 'The power of pull: How small moves, smartly made, can set big things in motion' Basic Books, 2012.

¹³Tina Nabatchi and Matt Leighninger 'Citizenship outside the public square: Public participation for 21st century democracy' John Wiley & Sons, USA, 2016.

¹⁴Reeve T Bull 'Making the administrative state safe for democracy: A theoretical and practical analysis of citizen participation in agency decisionmaking', Duke University, 2013.

Other experts and commentators agree involving the public more can improve buy-in to policy and programmes, in particular by improving trust. For example, a 2015 workshop of participation practitioners and experts had the key insight that '[Deliberative democracy] has the potential to restore trust in political decision-making.¹⁵ At the same workshop, Iain Walker, Executive Director of public participation not-for-profit the New Democracy Foundation, argued that '[p]oliticians now see trust as the number one commodity that will give them scope to act. Deliberative processes build trust. They provide circumstances where an average voter, who doesn't have the time to read in depth about a policy issue, will see a process that involved 'people like me' making the decision, and trust it'. These views corroborate OECD behavioural science studies that show that when people feel treated fairly by government their immediate reactions make enforcement of regulations and decisions easier.¹⁶



Policy register

Case study: *IP Australia's Policy Register involves the public in prioritising and developing IP policy*

IP Australia's Policy Register is a searchable list of IP issues that have been raised for policy action or legislative amendment. It contains over 70 policy issues relating to patents, trade marks, designs and plant breeder's rights.

The public can find details about proposed changes and get involved throughout the policy development process by submitting feedback. They can also submit new policy issues for consideration.

The beta version of the register was launched on 11 September 2017 for a six month period. User feedback will be collected and used both to improve the register, and to develop the policy and legislative proposals that it contains.

The Policy Register was developed in response to stakeholder requests for greater transparency and inclusion in the IP policy process.

IP Australia considers issues on the register and follows a robust process to assess, prioritise and progress each issue. Publication of the register allows the public to be actively involved in this process.

Find out more: <https://www.ipaustralia.gov.au/policy-register>.

¹⁵Wendy Russell and Lucy Parry 'Deliberative democracy theory and practice: Crossing the divide', Workshop Report, University of Canberra, 2015 [http://www.governanceinstitute.edu.au/magma/media/upload/ckeditor/files/DD%20Workshop%20report%20\(final\).pdf](http://www.governanceinstitute.edu.au/magma/media/upload/ckeditor/files/DD%20Workshop%20report%20(final).pdf)

¹⁶E. Allan Lind and Christine Arndt 'Perceived fairness and regulatory policy: A behavioural science perspective on government-citizen interactions', OECD, 2016. https://www.researchgate.net/publication/272415285_Perceived_Fairness_and_Regulatory_Policy_A_behavioral_science_perspective_on_government_-_citizen_interactions

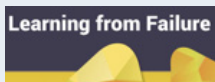
Technology makes involving the public easier than ever



One clear barrier to involving the public is the cost and time required to engage broadly, but new technology is reducing the cost. It is making it easier to match the right experts to the right opportunities in the right way, leading to faster and better decision making.

Indeed, some commentators cite revolutions in ICT technologies as an opportunity for engagement that governments simply shouldn't miss. For instance, Beth Noveck contends that new tools—what she calls technologies of expertise—are making it possible to match the supply of citizen expertise to the demand for it in government. UK Think Tank Nesta holds a similar view. Its recent 'Digital Democracy: The tools transforming political engagement' report argues that '[a]lmost every other sphere of life [besides government] finance, tourism, shopping, work and our social relationships – has been dramatically transformed by the rise of new information and communication tools, particularly social media or by the opportunities opened through increased access to and use of data, or novel approaches to solving problems, such as via crowdsourcing or the rise of the sharing economy.'¹⁷

So-called 'Civic tech' – technologies that help the public get involved in public affairs – are becoming more widespread. Civic tech is typically used by non-government organisations, but public services use it too. It includes electronic petitions or online 'suggestion boxes' such as We the People¹⁸ in the United States and ePetitions¹⁹ in the UK. The APS is already using technology similar to civic tech. Good examples in the APS include the ATO's LetsTalk. The Department of Social Services has Engage, a digital platform that allows for issues to be presented to the public and feedback sought digitally.²⁰



Case study: ATO Let's Talk – an example of the APS using civic tech for public participation

Let's Talk is an initiative of the Australian Tax Office. It provides a space for citizens to have their say and contribute ideas about the tax system as well as facilitating conversations in communities of interest such as superannuation or not for profit.

It includes information sharing and consultation tools including:

- News (information sharing)
- Discussion forums; and
- Surveys and Forms
- Ideation

Find out more: <https://lets-talk.ato.gov.au>

¹⁷ Julie Simon, Theo Bass, Victoria Boelman and Geoff Mulgan 'Digital democracy' Nesta, 2017.

Similarly, Beth Noveck's 'Smart Citizens, Smarter State' argues that public servants could better leverage technology to access citizen expertise. Reeve Bull makes a similar case in 'Making the administrative state safe for democracy: A theoretical and practical analysis of citizen participation in agency decisionmaking', Duke University, 2013.

¹⁸ We the People. Link: <https://petitions.whitehouse.gov/>.

¹⁹ UK Government and Parliament petitions. Link: <https://petition.parliament.uk/>.

²⁰ DSS Engage. See: <https://engage.dss.gov.au/>.



The Digital Transformation Agency has developed a digital marketplace that brings government together with digital specialists.²¹ Importantly the marketplace is being utilised by the Smart Cities initiative to allow councils building smart communities and digital services to connect and learn from each other.

Civic tech is not without drawbacks – in particular, while Civic tech offers useful opportunities for the public to have their say, often it does not tap the public’s expertise. Beth Noveck explains this opinion/expertise distinction: ‘[m]any governments at the federal, state and local level are beginning to use the Internet to engage people from outside by such means as electronic petitions or ‘suggestion box’ websites. The most notable example is the White House’s We the People site. The good side of these petitions websites is that they offer a new way for members of the public to draw attention to an issue. However, there are limits too. Specifically, it is often hard for policymakers to act on these petitions. What they usually provide is a naked demand that the government do something, without any of the necessary evidence, know how or instructions for how to do it. The government really uses these sites to ask people their opinion, rather than to draw on the public’s knowhow. As a result, the petitions usually don’t go anywhere.’

Case study: We the People – an example of a civic tech E-petition website that uses technology to seek and gauge the public’s opinion



We the People allows people to Create petitions about issues that matter to them. Users can gather signatures by forwarding their petition to others.

Once the petition gets 150 signatures, the petition becomes publicly searchable on the website. If it reaches 100,000 signatures in 30 days, the White House will ‘review the petition, make sure it gets in front of the appropriate policy experts, and issue an official response’.

Find out more: <https://petitions.whitehouse.gov/about#step-by-step>

²¹DTA’s Digital Marketplace. See: <https://marketplace.service.gov.au/>.

The National Innovation and Science Agenda's BRII Challenge is helping develop technology to tap the public's expertise

As noted above, technology can remove some of barriers to bringing the public into APS work. But it often falls a little short of being able to identify expertise and bringing that expertise together, as envisaged by Professor Noveck. This is where the Business Research and Innovation Initiative (BRII) may be able to assist.

The BRII is a pilot series of 'challenges' where the Commonwealth Government is encouraging businesses to develop more innovative solutions to government policy and service delivery problems.

One of the five pilot challenges is to develop a platform that digitally enables community engagement in policy, programme and service design. The BRII challenge acknowledges that governments are facing increasing pressure to be more responsive and to accommodate greater citizen and interest group involvement in the policy and programme development process. It acknowledges that co-design and collaboration can lead to better outcomes but that the gap between what governments achieve and what citizens expect continues to grow. Its overview states:

'At the heart of this problem are the current consultation and co-design methods which are time and cost prohibitive for both government agencies and business and community groups ... Innovation in the digitisation of communication, information handling, data analytics and social media tools potentially offers the opportunity to develop new co-design and consultation methods.'²²

The BRII challengers will try and combine the new methods and tools for collaboration and co-design, including social media, into a platform that consistently engages community stakeholders. As part of Commitment 5.2, we are working with them to increase their chances of success.

Case study: Besides being an innovative public participation model in itself, the BRII Challenge is seeking a technology platform that can tap the public's expertise

The BRII challenge was launched on 17 August 2016. Its five challenges are:

- Digitally enabled community engagement in policy and programme design
- On-the-spot technology for measuring pyrethroid surface residue
- Tracking the effect and value of information products
- Improve transparency and reliability of water market information
- Sharing information nationally to ensure child safety

Find out more: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bWXksGLjFdM> and <http://www.innovation.gov.au/page/business-research-and-innovation-initiative>.

²²Australian Government 'Digital enabled community engagement in policy and programme design - Overview', <https://www.business.gov.au/Assistance/Business-Research-and-Innovation-Initiative/Digitally-enabled-community-engagement-in-policy-and-programme-design>. Last updated 06/06/2017.

User Centred Design has a role to play

User Centred Design (UCD), discussed in our methodology section in Appendix A, is a creative form of problem solving.

As the people at leading UCD consultancy IDEO explain, '[User centred design] is a process that starts with the people you're designing for and ends with new solutions that are tailor made to suit their needs. Human-centred design is all about building a deep empathy with the people you're designing for; generating tonnes of ideas; building a bunch of prototypes; sharing what you've made with the people you're designing for; and eventually putting your innovative new solution out in the world.'²³

So UCD is a form of engagement that could be consultative, deliberative or collaborative, depending on how it is applied. If the user is 'passive' in the process and is simply used to identify a need or test a prototype the form of engagement would be more akin to consultation. But if the user is involved in the design phase, for example, developing a prototype, then the process can be more deliberative or collaborative.

UCD has been applied in the APS for many years, with the Australian Tax Office and the Department of Human Services being early adopters. It is becoming increasingly utilised across the APS with the drive for innovation. This can be seen in the rise of innovation labs in the APS with 14 dedicated innovation labs operating currently. It is also being applied on this project.

This increased emphasis on experimentation and innovation will be critical in addressing the complexity faced by the APS and as a driver for inviting more expertise into the conversation, as Beth Noveck writes:

'Closed public institutions are in need of upgrades and improvements, and that means accelerating the pace of research. It will be impossible to convince politicians and policymakers, let alone the public, that the transformation of institutions is imperative without research and experimentation to prove the positive impact of such changes on real people's lives. We need to follow Mark Moore's advice to become humble 'explorers who, with others, seek to discover, define and produce public value.'²⁴

Charles Leadbeater on the rise of Innovation Labs and experimentation in the public sector

Increasingly 'experimentalism is no longer confined to formal scientific labs' writes Charles Leadbeater. 'It has become an organising method for social policy, start businesses, venture capitalists, tech companies and the creative arts. Everyone it seems wants to experiment their way into the future and to do so they want labs, which are proliferating well beyond their traditional habitat in the natural sciences'. There is now a burgeoning movement of so-called public labs – explicitly experimental organisations with ties to government institutions.

Though diverse in their approaches, these innovation labs engage primarily in ethnographic processes of engaging citizens through observation and interviews in the design of public services. Most of the public labs are not focused on new technology, nor on comparative testing. But they do bring a spirit of experimentalism to public sector institutions.

²³ Ideo 'Design Kit', last accessed 5 July 2017. <http://www.designkit.org/human-centered-design>

²⁴ Beth Noveck 'Smart citizens, smarter state' Harvard University Press, 2015.

So what is public participation, and why can it help?

This section shows that there are no universal public participation definitions and approaches, nor any universal framework we could take ‘off the shelf’ and apply in the APS. Rather, it shows that the APS must develop tailored and shared public participation definitions and frameworks adapted to its own needs.

Some engagements in the range of public participation tools are familiar and business as usual to public servants. These include consultations through issues papers, roundtables and advisory panels, as well as communications and information sharing on agency websites.

However, more innovative engagements are less familiar. These include deliberation and collaboration engagements, where the public is invited into the conversation to identify, solve, implement and in some circumstances, decide. Examples of such engagements include user-centred design and ‘challenges’ like those described above, and many of the other engagements included in case studies throughout this report.

To build context and a common understanding on what we mean when we are talking about public participation, in this section we review:

- the many ways public participation is defined;
- why public participation is an innovation that can help public servants overcome the complexity of their work; and
- existing participation frameworks.

The terms used for public participation vary between organisations, jurisdictions and cultures

If you are confused by what ‘public participation’ means, or why you have not heard of it until now, part of the explanation is that there is no universally accepted term to refer to it. Public participation does not have a universal definition. It refers to an array of different engagements that public servants can use to involve and inform the public about their work.

Our research indicates public servants tend to use the term ‘consultation’ or ‘engagement’ as a catch-all term for the full range of public participation tools.

But different countries, organisations and jurisdictions use different terms. Terms focussing on engagement include ‘community engagement’; ‘civic engagement’; ‘public involvement’; ‘public engagement’; ‘community consultation’; ‘citizen engagement’; ‘participatory development’; ‘brand engagement’; or simply ‘engagement’ or ‘consultation’. Others refer to public participation models as ‘deliberative democracy’; ‘digital democracy’; ‘democratic innovation’; ‘collaborative governance’ and ‘participatory governance’.²⁵



²⁵ Sources: DIIS analysis, and Bang the Table, ‘Community Engagement versus Civic Engagement versus Public Involvement’, Bang the Table, 2014.



Our project will not attempt to settle which nomenclature is best. However, for clarity, we will refer to ‘public participation’ and ‘engagement’, and use these terms interchangeably.

Public participation is innovative

Regardless of how it is defined, public participation, particularly collaboration and deliberation, is an innovative way of doing business that can help public servants address the complexity of their work.

Like Open Source software, Wikipedia and Open Government, public participation reaps the benefits of open innovation. Business studies academic Henry Chesbrough defines open innovation as ‘a paradigm that assumes that firms can and should use external ideas as well as internal ideas, and internal and external paths to market, as the firms look to advance their technology’. He goes on to explain: ‘Innovators must integrate their ideas, expertise and skills with those of others outside the organisation to deliver the result to the marketplace, using the most effective means possible. In short, firms that can harness outside ideas to advance their own businesses while leveraging their internal ideas outside their current operations will likely thrive in this new era of open innovation.’²⁶

There are many existing public participation definitions and frameworks

We begin by introducing the IAP2 Spectrum, one of the world’s leading public participation definitions and frameworks, and compare it with other leading frameworks.

Could public participation do for policy what Open Source has done for software?

Open Source software licences promote collaboration and sharing because they permit people, other than the original code authors, to make modifications to source code and incorporate those changes into their own projects. It can be compared to proprietary software, where only the original authors can copy, inspect and alter that software.

Open Source has delivered or contributed to some outstanding software and has become ubiquitous. Examples include: Linux, Apache, Google’s Android, Firefox, Google Chrome, WordPress, My SQL and VLC Player.

If the public service better used public participation – both technological and non-technological – to tap the expertise of the public, the way Open Source has for software, could it anticipate similar success?

Sources: Open Source “What is Open Source?”, accessed September 2017. Link: <https://opensource.com/resources/what-open-source>.

²⁶ Open Innovation Community ‘Open innovation’, last accessed 5 July 2017. <http://openinnovation.net/about-2/open-innovation-definition/>.

The International Association for Public Participation (IAP2) provides one of the world's most used definitions of public participation, fleshed out by its Public Participation Spectrum.

IAP2 defines public participation as 'any process that involves the public in problem solving or decision making and that uses public input to make better decisions'.

IAP2's Public Participation Spectrum is a framework that expands their definition. It was established, in part, to create a common language and terminology for those interested in public participation processes.²⁸ The Spectrum describes the public's role in any of five forms of participation: inform; consult; involve; collaborate; and empower. It outlines the objective of the form of engagement and what the public can expect. The IAP2 approach acknowledges that each form of participation is legitimate and depends 'on the goals, time frames, resources, and levels of concern in the decision to be made'²⁹



What is IAP2? A snapshot

The International Association for Public Participation (IAP2) is a leading public participation organisation and peak body. It seeks to promote and improve the practice of public participation in relation to individuals, governments, institutions, and those interested in the public interest.

Source: IAP2 'About IAP2', IAP2. Last accessed August 2017: <http://www.iap2.org/?page=A3>.



²⁷ IAP2 'IAP2's Code of Ethics for Public Participation practitioners', IAP2. Last accessed August 2017: <http://www.iap2.org/?page=8>

²⁸ IAP2 Canada 'IAP2 Spectrum review – Summary of engagement processes', IAP2, 2017.

²⁹ IAP2 Australia 'Spectrum', IAP2. Last accessed August 2017: <https://www.iap2.org.au/About-Us/About-IAP2-Australasia-/Spectrum>.

Exhibit: IAP2's Public Participation spectrum provides a detailed definition of a wide range of public participation approaches

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 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 look to you for advice and innovation in formulating solutions and incorporate your advice and recommendations into the decisions to the maximum extent possible.	We will implement what you decide.

The IAP2 spectrum is widely used around the world and in Australia. Indeed, traditionally, engagement training adopts the Spectrum as its starting point.³⁰ In addition, many government departments at both the Commonwealth and state and territory levels have adopted or adapted the Spectrum in their stakeholder engagement frameworks. These include the Commonwealth Department of Health; and the Tasmanian and New South Wales Departments of Premier and Cabinet.

Despite its wide application, there is not universal agreement on the value of the application of the spectrum in its entirety. IAP2 Canada is reviewing the Spectrum, and initial consultations suggest there is interest in changing it.³¹ Similarly, participation academics Carson and Susskind question the value of the Spectrum's inform stream in the context of public participation. Susskind also contends that the 'empower' stream is not practical and that government's will rarely cede authority and in some circumstances they are legislatively prohibited from doing so.³²

³⁰ Crispin Butteriss 'What is community engagement, exactly?' Bang the Table, 2016. <http://www.bangthetable.com/what-is-community-engagement/>.

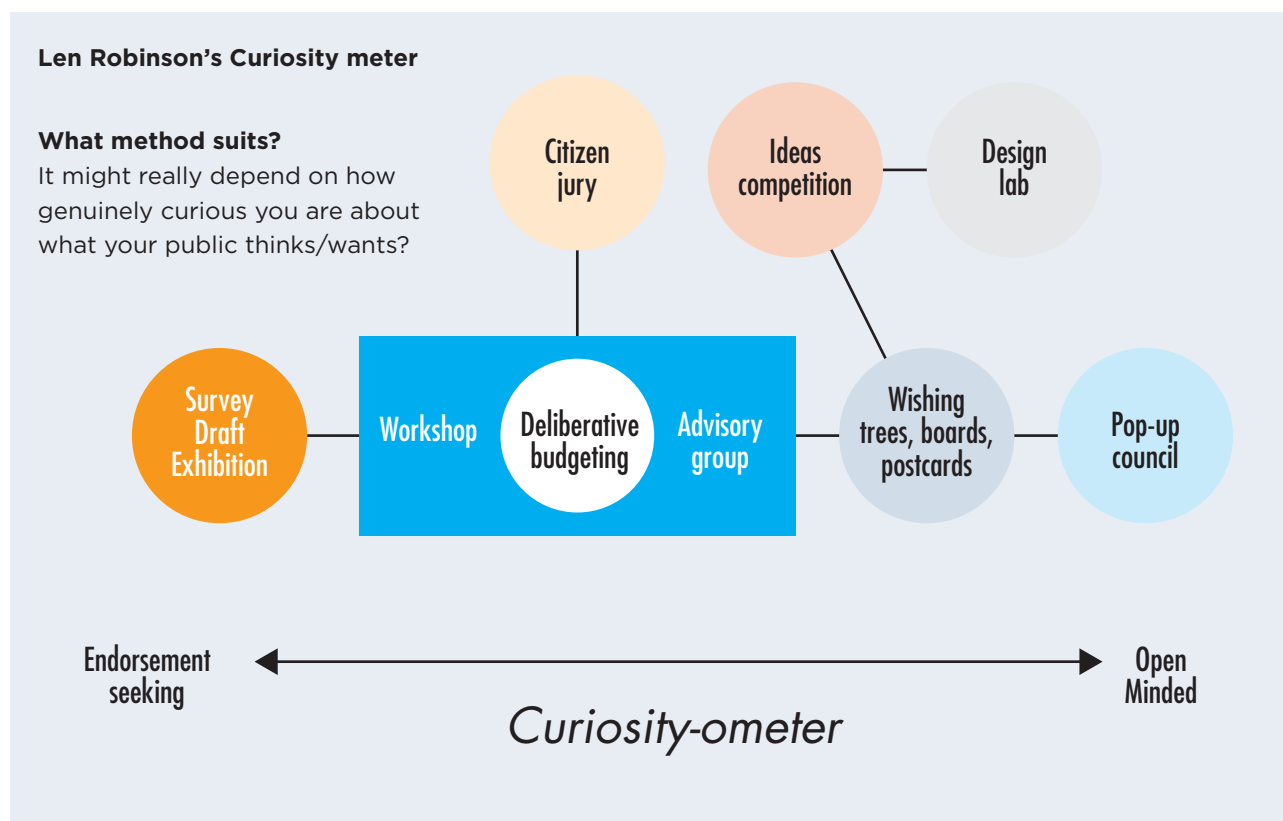
³¹ IAP2 Canada 'IAP2 Spectrum review - Summary of engagement processes', IAP2, 2017.

³² Compiled by Lyn Carson 'The IAP2 Spectrum: Larry Susskind, in conversation with IAP2 members' Active Democracy, 2008, last accessed 5 July 2017. http://www.activedemocracy.net/articles/Journal_08December_Carson.pdf

Some propose abandoning the IAP2 Spectrum altogether, or have developed alternative public participation definitions, spectrums and continuums. Participation academic Len Robinson, for example, goes as far as to ask 'Is the spectrum dead?' He argues that three of the five levels in the Spectrum seem to have conceptual or reality problems. He believes they 'do not make sense as intellectual categories either because they can't be implemented or, in the case, of 'Inform', aren't actually a category of consultation'. He argues that a spectrum with only two categories, consult and involve/collaborate would be closer to reality. Importantly he suggests that there is a missing category, listening. Robinson argues that public organisations have lost contact with the public and that there would be value in simply listening without an agenda.

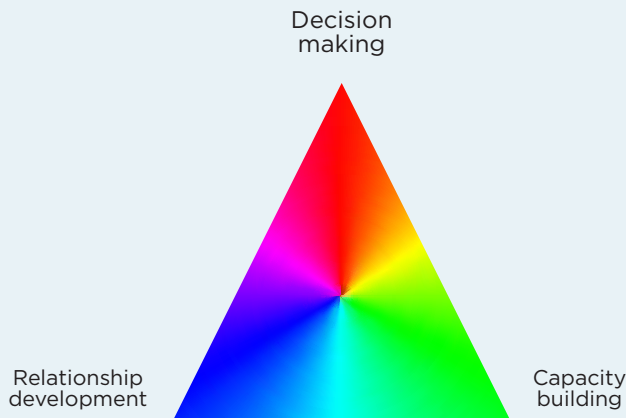
As an alternative, Len Robinson puts forward 'the Curiosity meter'. He states 'the idea is: before any community consultation, honestly answer this question: 'Where are you on the spectrum between 'endorsement seeking' and 'open-mindedness?' Being bracingly honest about this might reduce a lot of the wasted effort and conflict around community consultation.'

Leading digital engagement company Bang the Table has taken another approach. They believe that community engagement is about decision making, relationship development, or capacity building. They suggest 'the limitation of the [IAP2] Spectrum is that it is a very useful framework for community engagement around decision-making, but is less useful for relationship development and capacity building'.³³



³³ Crispin Butteriss 'What is community engagement, exactly?' Bang the Table, 2016. <http://www.bangthetable.com/what-iscommunity-engagement/>

Bang the Table's 'Community Engagement Triangle'



Bang the Table's alternative to the Spectrum is their 'Community engagement triangle.' The triangle reflects three key objectives as they see them and projects can move between the three. Importantly, they argue that the triangle 'acknowledges explicitly that there is more than one potential objective from a process of community engagement. More specifically, it positions 'decisionmaking' as just one of (at least) three potential objectives for the organisation. It thus helps to 'level' or 'democratise' the objectives. Each is valid. Each is actually more than 33 Crispin Butteriss 'What is community engagement, exactly?' Bang the Table, 2016. <http://www.bangthetable.com/what-iscommunity-engagement/> Len Robinson's Curiosity meter Bang the Table's 'Community Engagement Triangle' Decision making Relationship development Capacity building HIDDEN IN PLAIN SIGHT | ENHANCING PUBLIC PARTICIPATION IN THE AUSTRALIAN PUBLIC SERVICE 23 valid. Each is essential and core business for most organisations.'³⁴

Spectrums or continuums are not the only way to explain engagement, with others explaining public participation as a toolbox of approaches. Participation academic Jenny Stewart notes that '[w]hile it has been traditional to regard engagement as a type of 'ladder' or, less metaphorically, as a continuum, contemporary thinking sees engagement in more fluid terms. One possible metaphor is to see engagement as a star-like arrangement of techniques and sites, with each arm of the star corresponding to a particular set of opportunities. From this perspective, types of engagement are strategies corresponding to different kinds of situations and outcomes, rather than indices of power differentials'.³⁵

In this vein, the Ontario Provincial Government has adopted a 'star-like' framework/participation toolbox with four ways to engage:³⁶

- **Share** – Does government need to tell the public about a government initiative? People receive information about a government program or decision in an accessible way. Communication is one-way from the government to the public.

- **Consult** – Does government need to gather feedback from the public about a problem? People have an opportunity to weigh-in and provide their input. Participants advocate for their views on a subject.
- **Deliberate** – Does government need help from the public to frame or solve a problem? People help identify the issue and/or develop a strategy that the government commits to deliver. Participants take part in varying degrees to find common ground and collectively arrive at an agreement.
- **Collaborate** – Does government need help from the public to find and implement a solution? People work with government to define an issue, develop and deliver solutions. Participants share decision-making and implementation of solutions.

The approach here is to see the ways we can engage as buckets and to draw on a bucket depending on the need that you have identified. The Ontario framework emphasises the importance of diagnosing the problem and applying the right approach to help you solve the problem. There is no relative value assigned to the different ways to engage, it is very much horses for courses. This approach also avoids any perception associated with continuums that points on the left are less valuable than the points on the right.³⁷

³⁴ Crispin Butteriss 'What is community engagement, exactly?' Bang the Table, 2016. <http://www.bangthetable.com/what-iscommunity-engagement/>

³⁵ Jenny Stewart 'Dilemmas of Engagement' Australian National University, 2009.

³⁶ Government of Ontario 'Public Engagement', last accessed August 2017. Link: <https://www.ontario.ca/page/publicengagement>.

³⁷ This has been identified as an issue in IAP2 Canada's review of the IAP2 Spectrum, which notes that 'Some participants have noted how the Spectrum confuses new users who erroneously believe the continuum-points on the left are less valuable than those on the right'. See: IAP2 Canada 'IAP2 Spectrum review - Summary of engagement processes', IAP2, 2017.

Our initial ‘working’ public participation framework

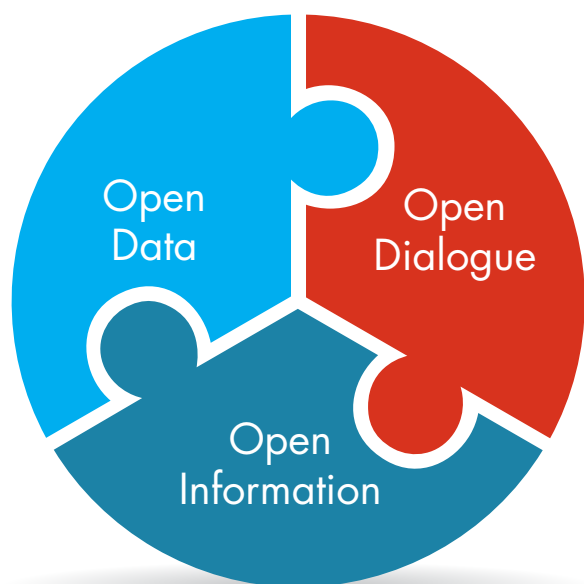
In the project’s Create phase, and as the Open Government National Action Plan’s Milestone 2, we will design an original and tailored public participation framework for the APS and its users.

However, for the purposes of the Discover phase, it is useful to start with a working framework, based on international standards and best practice. Our working framework is the Ontario Provincial Government’s framework. While all of the frameworks and approaches to public participation discussed above offer inspiration, our expert consultations and literature review indicate the Ontario Framework is well suited to the APS.

A working framework can help guide us in our work, to ensure our own public participation is good practice and meaningful. It can also help us explain public participation to stakeholders. Finally, it also provides a structure for our stocktake, and a lens to interpret and analyse existing public participation and our case studies (stocktake and case studies are below).

We are using the Ontario Provincial Government’s participation framework as our working public participation framework.

The Ontario Framework’s practical emphasis on applying the right engagement approach for the right problem is valuable. It acknowledges that consultation is a useful tool, but it is just one way that public servants can involve the public in policy and programmes.



The Ontario Framework is a valuable guide to public participation, because it draws on open dialogue to boost innovation

Open Dialogue thus is a catalyst for innovation and collaboration on Open Government: If data and information are the primary resources in a knowledge society, dialogue is the refinery that allows governments, businesses, and civil society to find and extract the value.”



It is also relevant because it is informed by innovative Open Dialogue principles. These principles ensure that the framework has a focus on innovation that makes it more likely to help public servants address the complexity in their work. These principles are also in the spirit of Open Government. Indeed, Don Lenihan, of Canada 2020, notes that Open Dialogue has emerged as an important component of the Open Government movement, with its two goals of increasing the effectiveness of policy decisions and outcomes and adding to the legitimacy of government decisions.³⁸ He explains that ‘Open Dialogue fires up a conversation between different people and organisations that gets them doing things together that they could not do alone.’ He further notes that that ‘Open Dialogue brings participants into the decision-making process — whether a little bit or a lot — and consultation does not.’³⁹

The Ontario Framework is particularly valuable because it is informed by the good practice and innovative ‘Open Dialogue’ principles – which can be contrasted with consultation principles

Consultation

- Is guided by basic engagement principles.
- Gives participants an opportunity to present their views to decision-makers, provide evidence and arguments in support of them, and reply to opposing views.
- Decision-makers are duty-bound to assess these positions on their merits, but they are not obliged to accept or act on them.
- Decision-makers are required to provide the rationale for their decisions.

Open dialogue

- Is guided by basic engagement principles.
- The engagement plan sets boundaries for how far and in what way citizens and/or stakeholders will participate in decision-making.
- The process begins by giving participants an opportunity to present their views to decision-makers, provide evidence and arguments in support of them, and reply to opposing views.
- Once views have been presented, participants engage in deliberative discussions about the best solutions, subject to the boundaries and rules set by the plan. These participants are duty-bound to assess different options on their merits and adjust their views accordingly.

³⁸ Don Lenihan ‘An Ontario Public Engagement Framework: Report of the Open Dialogue Initiative’, 2016.

³⁹ Don Lenihan ‘What is open dialogue and is it the answer to post-fact populism?’, Canada 2020, 2017. The quote in the call out box above is from the same publication.

Innovative approaches to public participation are gaining a foothold in our states and territories and worldwide

Participedia, an online global project that documents democratic innovations, notes there are hundreds of thousands of participatory processes occurring each year in almost every country in the world.⁴⁰



Case study: Ireland's Citizens' Assembly shows how governments are looking to public participation to investigate big issues

The Irish Citizens' Assembly places the citizen at the heart of important legal and policy issues facing Irish society today. With the benefit of expert, impartial and factual advice, the 100 citizen members deliberate on:

- Climate change
- Eighth amendment to Ireland's constitution (abortion)
- Fixed term parliaments
- Referendums process
- Challenges and opportunities of an ageing population.

The public can also make submissions (and has made 600 so far), and Assembly meetings (see image below) are live streamed.

The Assembly's conclusions will form the basis of a number of reports and recommendations that are submitted to the Houses of the Oireachtas (legislature) for further debate by elected representatives.

Find out more: <https://www.citizensassembly.ie/en/About-the-Citizens-Assembly/>

Participedia includes hundreds of participation case studies, including many from Australia. Public participation academic Lucy Parry notes in Participedia that South Australia, in particular, has wholeheartedly embraced the notion of deliberative democracy and has embarked on an ambitious raft of citizen engagement processes including several Citizens' Juries.⁴¹ Other examples include the Noosa Community Juries, Darebin Participatory Budgeting, City of Melbourne People's Panel, Geraldton 2029 and Beyond the Western Australian Freight Network Review.



Photo and additional source of information: The Irish Independent. <http://www.independent.ie/irish-news/news/citizens-assembly-chair-urges-irish-abroad-and-youth-to-make-your-voices-heard-35246808.html>

⁴⁰ Participedia. See: <http://participedia.net/en/about>

⁴¹ Lucy Parry 'When is a democratic innovation not a democratic innovation? The populist challenge in Australia', Participedia, 2016.

While public participation, in one form or another, has long been a feature of public services in Australia, systematic applications of public participation, including frameworks, are starting to gain hold. Most of the states and territories already have public participation frameworks, or in the case of Victoria, are looking to establish one. The Victorian Auditor-General's 2017 report into public participation found that unlike the Australian Capital Territory, New South Wales, Queensland, South Australia and Tasmania, Victoria does not have a current whole of government framework for public participation. As a result, the report found that an opportunity is being missed in helping to establish a consistent understanding of public participation responsibilities and priorities as well as contributing to greater consistency 'in activities and terminology across the Victorian Public Service—for example, the term 'co design' is used differently across departments'.⁴²

Similarly, a 2014 report by the Council for Social Services NSW (NCOSS) into participation in NSW found that the NSW State Government 'has made a high-level commitment to give the community a say in the State Plan (Goal 32, NSW2021). Recent initiatives have focused on devolved local decision-making, customer service reform, collaboration, and enhanced digital engagement. These are positive steps to improve the way government engages with citizens, particularly in relation to service delivery'.⁴³



Partnership Forum

Case study: Western Australian Partnership Forum

The Western Australian Partnership Forum brings together leaders from State Government agencies and the not-for-profit community sector, and consumer advocates, to improve outcomes for all Western Australians.

The Partnership Forum has adopted a set of principles and behaviours to govern and facilitate the partnership between the public and not-for-profit community sectors. Some of the important elements of the partnership are a collaborative approach, interdependence, mutual respect, trust and recognising the value and contribution of both sectors.



⁴² Victorian Auditor-General 'Public participation in government decisionmaking' Victorian Government Printer, 2017. <http://www.audit.vic.gov.au/publications/20170510-PP-Decision-Making/20170510-PP-Decision-Making.html>

⁴³ NCOSS Research Report "Have your say... but how? Improving public participation in NSW", NCOSS, University of Sydney, 2014. Link: <https://www.ncoss.org.au/sites/default/files/141128-participation.pdf>

Case studies: Examples of good practice public participation in Australia

As noted above, public participation is not brand new to Australia. Indeed, there are case studies spread throughout this report of excellent public participation in Australia.

Below, we have also included four detailed Australian case studies of good practice participation in Australia, to give a sense of what is already happening in Australian governments and how sophisticated, achievable and effective public participation can be.



Case study: Your SAY – showing just how comprehensive and effective public participation can be

Engagement type: Comprehensive public participation, including information sharing, consultation, deliberation, and collaboration initiatives.

Who is involved? Where?

Your SAY is an initiative of the South Australian Government, administered out of its Department of Premier and Cabinet.

Why was it started?

YourSAY offers a platform to deliver a comprehensive and integrated set of initiatives to provide people with opportunity to be involved in the decisions that affect their lives. It is part of the South Australian Government's 'Reforming Democracy: Deciding, designing and delivering together' policy. Key objectives are:

- To take deliberative practices to scale using digital engagement across a range of different programs (Fund My's below);
- To involve large numbers of the community – over 67,000 people have actively registered to influence decision-making on YourSAY; and
- Bring new ideas and expertise to inform better decision-making by employing open innovation techniques.

How does it work?

Raft of public participation initiatives, including:

- Fund My Neighbourhood – A \$40 million participatory budgeting initiative which gives everyday South Australians the power to nominate and choose neighbourhood improvement projects. Applications for Fund My Neighbourhood closed on 8 September 2017. A total of 2,475 applications were received. Community voting commences on 18 October and will be open until mid-November. Voting is online by community members in localised areas. A smart tool/pin drop expands to the closest 30 projects and enables participants to choose three projects to support on an interactive map <https://fundmyneighbourhood.yoursay.sa.gov.au/>.

- **Fund My Community** – A \$1 million annual participatory budgeting programme for community organisations to alleviate disadvantage. Over 7,500 people have participated (using a bespoke smart tool) to allocate funding to decide which projects receive funding. Final decision rests with the community. Three rounds have delivered savings for Government – 90% efficiency in grants processing costs, significant communications dividends and a streamlined process for applicants. This program won the 2017 United National Award for Excellence in Public Service (The Hague).
- **Fund my Idea:** Incorporating elements of place-based and participatory budgeting approaches, it provides a simple mechanism through which local communities nominate project ideas to benefit the region. Local people are then involved in deciding which projects are funded. Through the ten regional Fund My Idea programmes to date, 318 ideas were voted on with 22,667 votes cast. A total of 21 community-driven projects have received a share of \$500,000. In metropolitan rounds of Fund My Idea, 142 ideas were voted on with 11,355 votes cast. A total of 7 community-driven projects received a share of \$143,000. See: <https://yoursay.sa.gov.au/initiatives/fund-my-idea>.
- **Open State Festival** (consultation/solving problems through co-design/info sharing): 10-day festival of events, exploring how collaboration, innovation, ideas and enterprise can address the complex challenges of the future. 2016 event attracted 25,000 attendances at 60 events. This year there are six themes: Future Food, Future Human, Future Enterprise, Future Planet, Future Cities and Future Democracy with over 165 events. See: <https://openstate.com.au/about-open-state>.
- **Open Innovation Challenges** – For example, Share – sparking new collaborative enterprise using open innovation methods. Over \$300,000 of entrepreneurial activity will be funded through challenges. See: <https://share.yoursay.sa.gov.au/>.
- **Citizen juries:** Charging everyday South Australians with finding innovative ideas and solutions to complex issues that have become polarised in the community, including Dog and cat management; and Sharing the roads safely. The Dog and Cat management Citizen Jury contributed to legislative change to reduce the number of unwanted dogs and cats that are euthanised each year. See: <https://yoursay.sa.gov.au/initiatives/citizens-jury>.

Further information: <https://yoursay.sa.gov.au/>.





Case study: Empowered Communities – participation as a novel approach to Indigenous affairs

Engagement type: Collaborative – the process empowers Indigenous communities to work with government to find and implement solutions.

Who is involved? Where? Indigenous leaders from eight regions across Australia (urban, regional and remote), in collaboration with the Department of Prime Minister and Cabinet (lead), other Commonwealth agencies, relevant state government agencies, and corporate support.

The eight regions are:

- Cape York, in Queensland;
- Central Coast and Inner Sydney, in New South Wales;
- Goulburn Murray, in Victoria;
- East Kimberley and West Kimberley, in Western Australia;
- Ngaanyatjarra Pitjantjatjara Yankunytjatjara (NPY) Lands, in Central Australia (a cross-border region, SA/WA/NT); and
- North East Arnhem Land, in the Northern Territory.

Why was it started?

Indigenous leaders in the eight regions identified a need for a fundamental shift away from the traditional social policy framework in which Indigenous Affairs has been conducted, to a comprehensive Indigenous Empowerment agenda. It is based on the premise that Indigenous Australians have a right to development, which includes economic, social and cultural development as families, individuals and communities and as Indigenous peoples. Working together, with support from Jawun Corporate Partnerships and government, the leaders prepared a report on how to empower Indigenous people so they can have greater influence and control over the decisions that affect their lives.

The Empowered Communities: Empowered Peoples Design Report was provided to Government in March 2015. It outlines a plan for a long-term, transformational reform requiring a new partnership of Indigenous leaders, governments and corporate leaders in order to succeed, with all partners prepared to play their roles in a different way.

In December 2015, the Commonwealth Government committed to supporting implementation of the Empowered Communities initiative in the eight regions.

How does it work?

The Indigenous leaders are working with their communities and other stakeholders to identify local needs, priorities and aspirations. These feed into long term development agendas that address social, cultural and economic development.

Government support includes funding ‘backbone organisations’ in EC regions to provide critical capability for Indigenous leaders to drive implementation. The Government has also provided data and funding information to support collaboration on planning and joint decision-making about discretionary investment in the regions, and co-design of solutions to address community-identified priorities. PM&C Regional Network is supporting this effort on the ground.

Further information: <https://www.pmc.gov.au/indigenous-affairs/empowered-communities>

Case study: Try, Test and Learn Fund – working with users to develop a system that works for them

Engagement type: Variety of collaborative and deliberative engagements.

Who is involved?

The Department of Social Services (DSS), and three initial priority groups: young parents; young carers; and young students at risk of long-term unemployment.

Why was it started?

The \$96.1 million Try, Test and Learn Fund trials new or innovative approaches to assist some of the most vulnerable in society into stable, sustainable employment.

How does it work?

Open submissions process: In December 2016, the Fund opened with a public call for submissions, which welcomed ideas from community organisations, businesses, and individuals.

Through this process, the Department received 389 ideas, 294 of which were found eligible for further consideration. Ideas submitted to the Fund were published on the Department's consultative platform, DSS Engage (<https://engage.dss.gov.au/>). This improved the transparency of ideas being submitted and facilitated collaboration between idea proponents. DSS also operated an online forum, where interested individuals could discuss solutions for the priority groups.

A summary of each eligible idea was published on DSS Engage. To further encourage collaboration and innovation, idea proponents were encouraged through a newsletter and the Try, Test and Learn Handbook to read the ideas and contact others to discuss possible collaboration. New or refined ideas could be submitted following any collaboration.

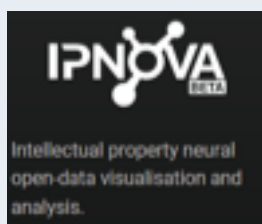
Policy Hack: To assist with idea generation, a Policy Hack event was held in Melbourne on 10 February 2017. The Hack included 93 participants, including representatives from community organisations, businesses, other government agencies, academics, and representatives from the three priority groups. Each team produced a policy proposal that was submitted into the broader submission process for the Fund.

Eligible ideas submitted through the public call for submissions and the Policy Hack were then assessed for their effectiveness, suitability for trial, and their level of innovation. After shortlisting, more than 35 ideas were taken to a Committee of relevant Commonwealth Government departments, for their consideration.

Co-development: Shortlisted ideas progressed to the Fund's co-development phase, where DSS worked closely with the idea proponents to refine their idea. In many cases, multiple similar or complementary ideas were combined during co-development, to assist in the development of a more robust and comprehensive proposal. This meant that the Department had to collaborate with many idea proponents on each proposal.

Twenty-six workshops, site visits and focus groups were held in Canberra, Mildura, Darwin, Hobart, Sydney, Melbourne, Brisbane and Adelaide between 10 April and 28 April 2017. Co-development activities involved a broad range of stakeholder representatives, including service providers (both non-for-profit and private), peak bodies, academics from the Department's Expert Advisory Panel, government representatives and representatives from each priority group.

Further information: <https://www.dss.gov.au/review-of-australias-welfare-system/australian-priority-investment-approach-to-welfare/try-test-and-learn-fund> and <https://engage.dss.gov.au/try-test-and-learn-fund/try-test-and-learn-fund-discuss/>.



Case study: IP NOVA – How an idea from GovHack developed into a valuable Intellectual property resource

Engagement type: Information sharing.

What is it?

IP NOVA is a free cloud-based data visualisation tool that enables anyone to explore the IP landscape based on IP Australia's open government data (IPGOD). The simplicity of the tool and the power of its search capabilities allow users to find answers on IP data within minutes.

Who has been involved?

IP Australia undertook a targeted stakeholder consultation, and co-designed the product through a number of workshops with users, sponsors and product developers. These workshops focused on understanding the problem, developing requirements and meeting user needs.

The beta version of IP NOVA was released on 22 October 2016 to collect feedback. This feedback is being used to improve the product and ensure it meets the needs of its users, before a final version is released in 2018.

Why was it started?

The IP Nova idea originated at the 2015 GovHack competition and offers a visually appealing method to provide self-service analytics on IP data with an easy to use interface. IP NOVA allows massive amounts of data to be easily explored, analysed and visualised to create new insights, enable new collaboration and drive better business decisions.

How does it work?

IP NOVA's visually immersive search engine enables data discovery across all registered patents, trademarks and plant breeder's rights in Australia over the last 35 years. The search mechanics for IP NOVA are fully customisable and include intuitive search suggestions, along with detailed help for more advanced users. Data visualisation is offered against the search results instantaneously.

IP NOVA is updated every week and searches can be based on:

- locations, including countries, states, localities and electorates,
- applicant names and unique identifier,
- keywords,
- technology and other classes,
- IP fields such as current status and filing date.

Find out more:
<https://ipnova.ipaustralia.gov.au/>.



So what is the problem?

Adoption of deliberative process at the Commonwealth level has been relatively low when compared with local and state government. If greater engagement and participation with the community have been shown to improve both government decision making and the level of confidence in those decisions, why haven't we adopted it more at the Commonwealth level?

The APS is less active in respect of engagement and participation with the community due to:

- Lack of awareness of the practices that are available;
- Lack of confidence in the potential benefits to decision making from such activities relative to the time and cost involved; and
- Lack of capability to execute such activities in an effective way.

The first part of the paper detailed our secondary research – findings from consultation with experts and our literature review. This research suggests that the problem that the framework is to address can be stated as follows:

The Australian Public Service is missing opportunities to develop more innovative and valued solutions to complex public policy problems due to a lack of effective engagement with the expertise available in the business, academic and the general community. By not engaging more effectively the APS is potentially missing the chance to improve both government decision making and the level of confidence in those decisions.

An insight into the problem? An academic study of the abandoned Climate Change Citizens' Assembly, 2010

In 2010, the Gillard Government announced a Citizens' Assembly to address the issue of climate change. The initiative generated significant controversy and criticism, even though there is nothing intrinsically wrong with deliberative citizen assembly models.

To understand the backlash, an academic study analysed 200 media articles and summarised criticisms as follows:

- The assembly was a threat to democracy – undermining elected representatives.
- The assembly was an abrogation of duty – a 'cop out' or 'gimmick' cynically designed to 'neutralise' a controversial issue.
- There were procedural objections – how would it work? What information would participants get? Who will appoint them?

The study found most concerns didn't have a basis in the academic evidence. But they noted that highly politicised and high profile issues might be beyond deliberative engagement and that there needs to be awareness of opposition to deliberative citizen engagement by Australia's opinion elite.

Source: John Boswell, Simon Niemeyer, Carolyn Hendriks 'Julia Gillard's Citizens' Assembly Proposal for Australia: A Deliberative Democratic Analysis', Australian Journal of Political Science, Australian National University, 2013.

Australia has a strong international reputation for engagement and participation based in large part to the activities undertaken at the state and local levels. Why is the APS less likely to utilise the broader spectrum of engagement activities? What are the barriers to the Commonwealth utilising a broader range of engagement activities and what would be the conditions that would see the Commonwealth better utilise the full range of approaches

Our hypothesis is that:

The APS is less active in respect of engagement and participation with the community due to:

- **Lack of awareness of the practices that are available**

Public participation has been around a long time. Consultation and information sharing tools have been regularly used since the 1970s. While collaboration and deliberation might be relatively less common, they haven't emerged recently either. Systematic approaches to public participation go back at least to 1969, and deliberation has been a mainstream idea in political science and policy studies since the 1980s. Engagement is becoming increasingly professionalised. For example, there is a public participation association – IAP2 Australasia, which, among other things, advocates on behalf of its members; includes a register of engagement consultancies; and offers training certificates in engagement and participation.

Yet our problem identification research suggest that most public servants have never heard of public participation; and tend to think of engagement as the more formal consultation mechanisms such as issues papers. Where tools such as the IAP2 spectrum are used, it tends to be in specific communications and stakeholder engagement teams with little penetration into agencies.



- **Lack of confidence in the potential benefits to decision making from such activities relative to the time and cost involved**

The more deliberative and collaborative approaches to engagement and participation can make a significant call on time and resources and if not executed well may lead to a perception that the outcome was not worth the effort. Our initial expert consultations also suggests that some public servants do not see much value in further engagement with the public and have little confidence in the expertise of citizens.

- **Lack of capability to execute such activities in an effective way**

The more innovative approaches to engagement do require a level of expertise to execute well that may be in short supply across the APS. Poor execution of engagements can lead to a lack of results in turn fuelling views that there is little value in further engagement, making the situation worse.

Others are more willing, but don't know how to do more meaningful engagement

As a result, when we do engage, we are not executing it well. Also, a lack of results from engagement can fuel views that there is little value in further engagement, making the situation worse.

¹ Sally Hussey 'International public participation models 1969-2016', Bang the table, 2017. <http://www.bangthetable.com/international-public-participation-models-1969-2016>

² Wendy Russell, Lucy Parry 'Deliberative democracy theory and practice: Crossing the divide', University of Canberra, [insert year].

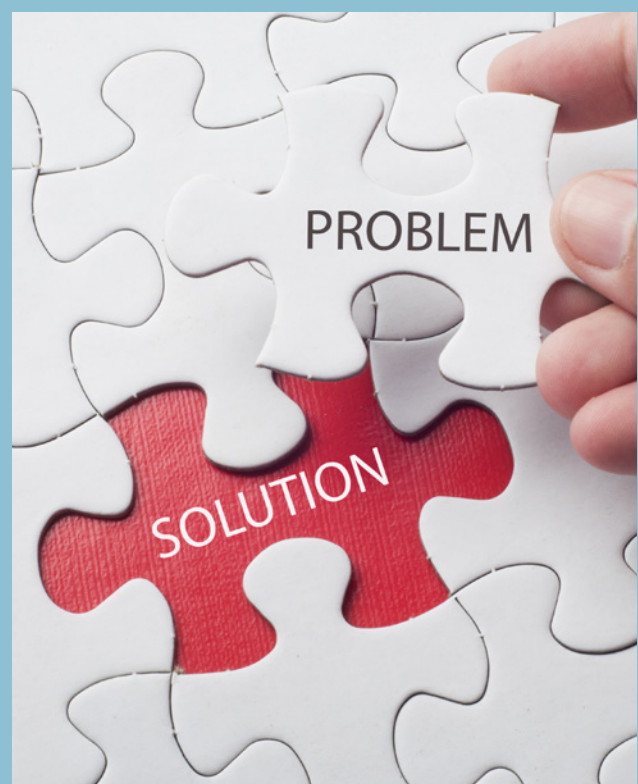
Chapter two: Why does the problem occur?

We conducted user research: ethnographic interviews of 75 ‘users’ of APS public participation – public servants and members of the public – to explore why the problem occurs from their point of view.

There's many reasons why our users are often not aware of public participation, and why they often lack the confidence and capability to try it. The APS interviews showed that awareness and practical experience of how to engage the community beyond traditional information sharing and consultation approaches is patchy across the APS. Consultation often has an emphasis on obtaining buy in rather than accessing expertise. There is hesitation in applying more deliberative and collaborative approaches, in part due to a perception of risk and a lack of value for the effort required. Sometimes external constraints such as legal or parliamentary processes exclude more open dialogue.

From the perspective of the community, they see themselves as having specific expertise with unique and useful perspectives to bring to the table on matters of public policy and that it is in the public interest for them to do so. There is a level of scepticism with the motivations of government engagement. The community is pragmatic and realistic, they are aware of and appreciate some of the constraints that public servants face.

Our users and their needs are also nuanced and myriad. Our ‘personas’ – hypothetical archetypes of actual users – show that APS staff have different risk appetites for adopting more public participation, and they should form the basis of any strategy to encourage adoption. They also



show that the members of the public are, in principle, quite motivated to get more involved in the APS' work. But they have differing motivations, constraints and expertise to bring. This should be factored into messaging and targeting of our public participation to make the most of it.



The insights from the user research were supported by the findings of a stocktake of current engagement practices across thirteen APS departments. While the APS engages the public in a wide variety of ways, the majority of engagement practices focus on information sharing and consultation. Many of the practices, such as submissions processes and feedback mechanisms, were transactional in nature and did not engender a sense of valuing an ongoing relationship with the community

“

We don't know what problem we should be working on until we understand our users. The process isn't about having a problem as given, we need to deeply understand those who we want to serve first.”

IDEO

Chapter process overview

The Problem Identification stage defined what is the real issue we're trying to solve is.

The Empathise stage explores why this issue occurs – discovering users' explicit and implicit needs so they can be met through design solutions. After all, users will probably not adopt a framework that doesn't meet their needs.

It is about gathering qualitative primary data to provide a deep understanding of the users of public participation – both public servants and the public. It combines with the Problem Identification stage's secondary data. This way, we build a more complete evidence base to inform solutions that can drive the behavioural change to encourage public participation in the APS.

User research methodology

The main method to gather primary data was ethnographic user interviews. They are about empathy – building a rich understanding of users’ experience of public participation. This helps us understand how and why public participation works (or fails to work) on the ground, and what should change to encourage users to do more and better participation.

We consider both APS employees and members of the public to be ‘users’. This is because we will need to reach both of them to improve public participation, particularly to encourage adoption of more and better public participation.

User interviews build empathy by seeking to evoke stories about the user’s experiences engaging the public and engaging with government. Their open ended nature helps us explore user needs and motivations, their culture and mutual differences, and qualitative information like words, descriptions, ideas and feelings. They help us see the opportunities and challenges from the users’ own perspectives, and uncover what it is going to take for them to do more and better public participation.

Data from the user interviews with APS staff and non-APS interviewees is synthesised below to translate it into accessible conclusions. We have synthesised it accordingly:

- **Themes:** An aggregation of insights. There are five each for both the APS and the public.
- **Insights:** Collation of raw user feedback and stories, in the form of statements about users’ personal behaviours, expectations, bias, motivations, feelings and experiences relating to public participation. They should connect at an emotional level with users. They should provoke a clear response like ‘They understand me! / That’s exactly how I feel!’ (Even if I never thought about it quite like that).
- **Implications:** The ‘so what’ of the insight – succinct statements that point the way forward to better public participation. When leveraged, they have the power to change user behaviour.

Where we heard an illustrative quote from users, we included these in the insights or implications. This helps ensure the user’s voice is heard and builds

empathy with them – understanding the problems and opportunities from their perspectives.

There are also synergies and similarities between our themes. We have developed a systems map (Appendix C) that demonstrates these.

Together, this synthesis forms the empathy that informs tailored and efficient solution design. They will be drawn on in the Define stage (below); and give shape and form to brainstorm and problem solving in the Create phase.

What do we mean by ‘ethnographic user interviews’?

They are with ‘users’, that is, people who are actually involved in public participation (or might be, if it became more widespread).





They are ‘interviews’ in the sense that:

- They were usually with one user, with a lead interviewer and a scribe, as opposed to a group conversation;
- Had open ended questions, rather than direct questions like a survey or a roundtable consultation; and
- interviewees spoke for the vast majority of the interview.

They are also ‘ethnographic’ in the sense that they focus on studying people and cultures, from the point of view of the subject of the study. They also usually took place in the user’s own work environment – the place where their participation efforts actually occur. This is subtle, but often environments and the artefacts in them trigger memories and contextualise user experience.

The discussion guides for user interviews are at Attachment A.

We also conducted a survey to stocktake current approaches to public participation across APS departments, to help test the results of the interviews. The survey was a required output for the Discover milestone, under Australia's Open Government National Action Plan

USER RESEARCH		
	75 People	38 APS 37 Non-APS
	42 Organisations	13 APS 29 Non-APS
	5 States & Territories	NSW, VIC, SA, QLD, TAS, ACT
	Multiple Roles & Levels	APS – policy, programme & service delivery. Non-APS – business industry associations, not for profit & academia

Themes and implications from user interviews with APS staff

Demographic breakdown of ethnographic user interviews of APS employees:

- 38 people
- 13 organisations
- Range of levels
- Range of roles, including:
 - Policy;
 - Programmes;
 - Service delivery; and
 - Communications.

APS Theme 1:

Awareness and practical experience of how to engage the community beyond traditional information sharing and consultation is patchy. There are good examples of more collaborative approaches, but this is not the norm.

Insights:

The vast majority of participants had only ever been involved in consultation and information sharing processes. Some were undertaking User Centred Design, which can have elements of deliberation and collaboration. However, many participants who used User Centred Design didn't bring the public into the decision making process, thus limiting the participation to a consultation only rather than collaboration or deliberation.

Implications:

Prior to engaging the public, we are not necessarily analysing the nature of the challenges before us and applying the most appropriate approach to engage the community. More often we are simply doing what we have traditionally done and as such missing potential opportunities to bring a wider view and broader expertise into our work that can lead to better outcomes and broader support for those outcomes.

Since traditional modes of engagement like consultation through issues papers are static, they also result in stakeholder engagement being more transactional by nature than an ongoing relationship or partnership.



APS Theme 2:

Consultation often has an emphasis on obtaining buy in rather than accessing expertise.

Insights:

Participants did not demonstrate a strong sense of the potential benefits of working with the public. For many, consultation seemed to be about managing the public/stakeholders rather than seeing them as a possible source of expertise. Some participants didn't see the public as capable of adding expertise, some actually saw them as a source of complaints rather than help, and others described them as lacking objectivity.

While some participants clearly wanted to get more out of their engagement with the public, they didn't know how. This was often accompanied by a reversion to the norm of 'this is how things have always been done' and 'I already knew what they were going to say'. There's also evidence to suggest many public servants do not reflect on their own engagement processes, and ways to improve.

Implications:

The emphasis by participants on obtaining buy in and managing stakeholders, and doing so through the more traditional forms of information sharing and consultation, limits the ability to create shared understanding and commitment. Buy in is all about obtaining agreement or acceptance, not about working together to produce a better outcome.

As much of the consultation is transactional and only opinion is being sought, it can foster entrenched views. It limits the opportunities for people with differing views to consider the opposing views in the context of the challenge or problem.

It also means that we are not accessing all the expertise available.

It can make key stakeholders spectators rather than active participants which, with more complex issues, can hinder the development of the best solution as well as reducing commitment to the end outcome, making it harder to gain and maintain buy in. In broad terms, people are very supportive of what they design and less so when only their opinion is polled.



APS Theme 3:

There's a knowing/doing gap between what the participants know about best practice information sharing and consultation, and what often occurs. This is in part due to a perception that best practice approaches can carry risk, take too long and add little value.

Insights:

Many participants displayed an understanding of the need to close the loop after a consultation, be transparent about the purpose, and give sufficient information so stakeholders can add genuine value by contributing meaningfully. However, in practice there was often no mechanism for closing the loop, too often participants were unable to get stakeholders to engage, because they have been consulted on the same issue too many times, and weren't told what was done with the information previously provided.

Participants also expressed that there is a lack of capability within the APS to consult, and many of the formal consultations are carried out at a senior managerial level. This is exacerbated by an attitude that 'consultation doesn't need to be taught', and 'is the bread and butter of a policy officer'.

Implications:

The APS should not hesitate to engage due to fears that the public will demand an impractical process.

When engaging, public servants should be clear about what is and is not 'on the table'. The public has a high tolerance for justified parameters. For example, if there is no room to move on a policy, public servants could still make clear that the public can influence its implementation.

Of course, this might lead to some disappointment. The public would like to influence every aspect of policy and programmes. But it would still be preferable to being silent or unclear about what is actually in scope, and letting that ambiguity be an 'elephant in the room' during engagement. It will make the public more motivated to contribute.



APS Theme 4:

In many instances our internal processes, including parliamentary and legal, can act as a barrier/constraint to achieving best practice engagement.

Insights:

There are a number of valid constraints to more open engagement with stakeholders that include parliamentary, security and legal requirements. Often these process internal to government do not line up with time frames for more deliberative engagement processes. Participants reported that, in some cases, to have a comprehensive engagement process you must have support from the senior executives and ministers.

Implications:

The valid constraints of the operating environment mean that some processes cannot be as open as would be ideal. These restraints should be clearly conveyed to stakeholders at the outset of any engagement and not used as an excuse not to engage.

These constraints underline the importance of establishing ongoing meaningful relationships with key stakeholders that go beyond transactions. If we engage effectively when we can, stakeholders will be more understanding of the occasions when we can't.



APS Theme 5:

Traditional consultation processes have helped develop the base skills needed to engage in more deliberative or collaborative processes

Insights:

APS employees do have an understanding of what good practice information sharing and consultation looks like. They know that engagement can help get buy-in for their work. They understand the importance of tailoring messages, framing content, using different mediums for different messages, and using emotional intelligence to empathise with people and to build strong relationships with them. This sophistication comes from personal experience and rules of thumb. It didn't come from formal stakeholder engagement strategies or frameworks.

Implications:

Consultation remains the main way in which the APS engages, but there is a good base of the soft skills required to engage in more deliberative and collaborative ways. But a framework in and of itself will not drive a significant change in the way in which the APS engages the expertise within the community.

Themes and implications from non-APS user interviews

Demographic breakdown of ethnographic user interviews with the public:

- 37 people
- 5 states and territories
- 29 organisations, including from:
 - Business;
 - Industry associations/peak bodies;
 - Engagement practitioners;
 - Not-for-profits; and
 - Academia.

Non-APS Theme 1:

Participants are often subject matter experts. They also have unique and useful perspectives. They influence the opinions of the community. They believe that it's in the public interest for public servants to engage with them.

Insights:

Participants clearly had subject matter expertise that would be useful to public servants, built up over years of experience, research, and sometimes even from periods of working in government.

Participants have valuable practical experience on how things will work on the ground. They want to share this with public servants.

Many participants are willing to help the APS tap into their networks and find end users to engage. These could provide further expertise, feedback and buy-in for policy and programmes.

Participants noted that they may be self-interested on some issues. But they can take a step back and look at the bigger picture of what is the best outcome for the economy and the country as a whole. They understand theirs is just one voice among many.

Implications:

There is significant expertise in the public. In principle, the holders of this expertise are willing and able to help make better policy and programmes.

More meaningful engagement has the potential to increase the legitimacy of policy and programmes. Stakeholders can influence their constituents and the community, and are more likely to support work they co-design.

Further, as a general rule, public servants should not hesitate to engage on the grounds that the community is polarised and will demand that government agree with all of their views. The community understands that compromise is necessary.



Non-APS Theme 2:

In the main, participants are sceptical about government engagement. They often doubt its quality, and wonder if it is genuine. This can leave them frustrated and more adversarial.

Insights:

- Most participants could identify at least a few good experiences of government engagement, particularly participants from peak bodies. Some reported positive experiences using government websites; others had participated in effective stakeholder forums; and others had stories of high quality face to face contact with public servants.
- However, most participants reported experiences that made them doubt whether the government was actually interested in hearing their views. For example, some described attending workshops or events where public servants or politicians spent most of the time talking at them rather than listening, or covering topics that had already been covered in other consultations; or being asked mostly leading questions. One participant reported 'There's not a lot of consultation, let alone co-design. It's mostly information sharing because the decision has already been made'.
- Many participants thought that the APS often isn't clear about what their engagement is trying to achieve. This left them confused, losing motivation to contribute, and wondering whether they were wasting their time. One illustrative comment was 'it was never clear what the government was interested in...and how the meetings would contribute to the agenda'. Others said that consultation is often about 'attracting media attention', while another commented that an engagement styled as consultation seeking feedback 'felt like an elaborate PR exercise'.
- Others thought that engagement sometimes defied common sense, with process valued over outcomes. Some lamented 'a public service where public servants are not able to objectively evaluate, instead [they] defend their programmes, even if it's not valuable'.

- Many reported insufficient time or notice as a major constraint on contributing meaningful analysis. This also fuelled doubts that engagement is not genuine.
- Others reported engagements labelled as 'co-design' or 'collaboration' that in fact were information sharing or consultation. This undermined trust and sparked cynicism.

Implications:

There is a high level of mistrust with much of current government engagement. Mistrust means engagements often fail to make the most of the public's expertise. It also fuels adversarial and positional bargaining, at the expense of higher value add partnerships and co-creation.

Some well-intentioned engagements have gone awry and undermined trust. As such, public servants may need help selecting the right engagement tool for the job, and not rely on 'one size fits all'. They should also consider whether they have the capability to execute advanced engagement before implementation. Bad or mismatched engagement can be worse than no engagement. It causes frustration that can lead stakeholders to criticise policy and programmes to their constituents and to the media. There may also be a vicious cycle at play, due to how this theme interplays with APS themes above. For example, community mistrust of current government engagement might be fuelling behaviours from the community that contributed to comments from APS employees (noted in the APS insights above) that described some stakeholders as 'too passionate' and 'difficult to manage' rather than as useful partners. In turn, if APS employees subsequently react to such behaviours by treating the community as 'stakeholders to be managed' rather than as useful partners, this would further contribute to mistrust in government engagement.



Non-APS Theme 3:

Participants are pragmatic and realistic. They understand that the APS has legitimate constraints on its engagement, and can't always do best practice.

Insights:

Many participants know doing best practice can be hard and time consuming, often because they are sophisticated engagers themselves. For instance, engagement practitioners noted that advanced engagement can be hard to explain to stakeholders, and difficult to distinguish from more familiar practices like communications and advertising.

Many participants acknowledged that public servants, in particular, face barriers to doing best practice engagement. In fact, many knew these barriers from having worked for or in government themselves.

They cited as barriers: limited time and resources; public perceptions that government and the APS are one in the same, and/or a 'policeman' or untrustworthy; hierarchical approval processes; and limited support for innovation sometimes exacerbated by risk aversion.

Some participants recognised that many public servants want to do more collaboration and deliberation, but it is difficult to get authority. This frustrates them, as sometimes the 'window of opportunity is missed because the approval process takes too long'.

In particular, participants understand that political constraints can be a major barrier to engagement. Many acknowledged that public servants need solutions quickly, in particular to respond to media cycles, and it's hard for them to find time to engage.

Implications:

The APS should not hesitate to engage due to fears that the public will demand an impractical process.

When engaging, public servants should be clear about what is and is not 'on the table'. The public has a high tolerance for justified parameters. For example, if there is no room to move on a policy, public servants could still make clear that the public can influence its implementation.

Of course, this might lead to some disappointment. The public would like to influence every aspect of policy and programmes. But it would still be preferable to being silent or unclear about what is actually in scope, and letting that ambiguity be an 'elephant in the room' during engagement. It will make the public more motivated to contribute.

Non-APS Theme 4:

Participants are interested in more advanced collaborative and deliberative engagements. They are also hopeful of building ongoing relationships with the APS.

Insights:

Regardless of their sector – whether they work in a bank, an industry peak body, or a humble one-person activist organisation – participants want to be involved in more collaborative and deliberative processes. They see these as enabling them to play a crucial role developing and implementing successful policy and programmes.

They also want to build a sustainable partnerships with the APS, rather than transactional and adversarial relationships. Participants cited having a relationship with public servants as important to getting more out of engagement with government.

But they found building relationships with the APS very challenging. In part, they found it difficult to find contacts, often relying on existing networks of someone else in their organisation. Those who had an ongoing relationship struggled to maintain it, in part due to frequent staff turnover and lack of handover when staff change. One participant said ‘every time I find a contact, they leave and I have to start again’.

Implications:

The public are willing to provide more expertise. And, as one participant noted, if public servants really want to co-design with the public, ‘they need to take a leap of faith and relinquish control’.

Finally, there is scope for the APS to invite participants into the design of its engagements. This would improve the chances of both parties having their needs met.



Non-APS Theme 5:

There are some universal basics that help make an engagement effective and genuine. Participants made useful suggestions on how to get them right.

Insights:

Some features of effective and genuine engagements were reported by so many participants that they are probably universal. Some are noted above and included: listening more than talking; closing the loop; not asking the same questions already asked in previous engagements; allowing enough time to respond; avoiding engagements during busy periods like Christmas, New Year and Easter; and being transparent about the aims and stages of the process. Many clearly valued face to face interactions, noting these made them feel listened to.

Participants made specific suggestions on how to improve on current engagements, including creating incentives for APS staff to engage the public; undertaking engagement in 'real time' and not waiting for set pieces (like formal issues papers and roundtables) for feedback; and adding requirements to engage into SES staff contracts. Drawing on their own expertise and good experiences engaging with government, they made numerous suggestions to make engagement more genuine and effective. Many stressed the importance of using simple language, engaging early, and working on 'soft skills'.

Participants urged the APS to be more open. This included being up front about what they are doing; where information will go once it is collected; and for the APS to define value in working together on both sides. After a consultation is over, some wanted government to release the data and information they relied on to reach a decision.

Perceptions also matter. Most of the participants were adamant that the APS actually needs to deliver rather than just be seen to be delivering.

Implications:

Getting the basics right is crucial to build trust. Simple things like improved customer service, up to standards provided by big companies, would go a long way. This includes being more reciprocal with the public, and talking like normal people with ordinary and everyday language.



Personas of typical public participation users in the APS and the public

To further build empathy, we segmented our users into personas.

Personas are a design tool used in many professions as ‘hypothetical archetypes of actual users’. In our project, they are a composite of real users who we interviewed. They summarise their most relevant characteristics in respect of public participation. They show that different users will require different and tailored strategies to encourage better public participation.






They can inform thinking about opportunities in the Define stage; and stimulate brainstorming and solution testing in the Create phase. They are also the building blocks for other design techniques, like user journeys. These can help identify useful intervention points and model what impact changes might have on users. This will be important to design ways to encourage adoption of more and better public participation.

The personas are not intended to represent any single person. Nor are they intended to imply that our users are simplistic and can be easily stereotyped. Rather, they are just one source of information to augment our other sources of evidence. And they are a means to communicate a swathe of qualitative data in a memorable way, and make it easier to design solutions that encourage public participation.

Personas – Members of the public

We segmented members of the public into five personas: Philippa, Vivienne, Sue, Andrew, and James. We chose these segments because they cover the different sectors the APS engages, and show that each sector has differing:

- needs and motivations to get involved in the APS’s work;
- constraints on its engagement; and
- different expertise to bring into the APS’s work.

Philippa Academic Building the evidence base for change	Vivienne Not for profit Not about the Money	Sue Engagement professional ‘It’s essential to our democracy’	Andrew Industry body representative Common sense	James Financial sector Let’s make a deal
				

As noted above, our personas will play a crucial role in the project’s Create phase. They help build a shared understanding of when and why a member of the public might get involved in the APS’s work, as well as what kind of design solutions will meet their needs, work around their constraints, and make the most of their expertise.

In the short term, they can serve as a useful guide for public servants looking to gain an understanding of their users that can increase the chances they select the right participation tool for the kind of expert it is trying to reach and the kind of expertise they are seeking.

Non-APS Personas



Philippa
Academic

Building the evidence base for change

'It's a cliché, I know, but I don't want my work to be purely 'academic'!'

I am: My research interests are public policy, administration, contemporary governance and public participation.

I care about: I wanted to be an environmental activist, but when I was a student I felt that I could make a better contribution building up the evidence base and teaching public policy. But I'm still really curious about how and why activists succeed in influencing policy – and that led me to research on public participation.

My experience with engagement: I comment on issues paper relevant to my research. I have also given speeches on public participation to public servants at seminars and conferences. I've also been part of committees and workshops run by the public service seeking academic input into their work. Most rarely, I've led or partnered with government on similar workshops or initiatives myself, that sought to bring more public participation into the public sector.

My biggest pain points: When I go to a workshop seeking my expertise, I do see public servants nodding their heads, but know that they're not absolutely convinced either. Some of these processes were labelled 'public participation' or 'collaboration' but in retrospect, it was clear there was very little, if any room to move on practical policy. Despite these challenges, I'd be open to doing more work with government, if there was more interest and they were more willing and able to take on outside views.

My biggest satisfaction: When I know that my research interests have clearly had an impact on policy.



Vivienne
CEO

Not for profit

'Not about the Money'

I am: My organisation employs 12 full and part time employees. Our work covers both state and federal government jurisdictions. We are funded by both government and philanthropy.

I am a strong networker.

I care about: I have a passion for helping others. I believe in the role of government. I have a strong sense of social justice and equality. I am very time poor so every minute is precious. I think it is important, where possible, to have a seat at the table in the development of public policy that impacts on my members.

My experience with engagement: Unfortunately most of my engagement with the Commonwealth is being asked to comment on issue papers at the last minute or being invited to workshops in Canberra at short notice and never knowing if you have had any influence. Many of the workshops or events have far too many people invited for everyone to get a say, and a lot of the time is spent with ministers or public servants talking rather than listening.

My biggest pain points: It is very hard to work out who are the right people to talk to in the Commonwealth and when you do find the right person they change jobs and you are back to square one again. You don't know what you don't know, so often I don't find out about programmes or issues that are relevant to my members, or when I do find out it is too late. I also find it frustrating that when I do get the chance to comment on issues the timeframes are so short it puts me under lots of pressure and then I never hear what happens with my contribution. When I write to government asking questions, I often get no response for a long time. When I get a response, it is often generic and high level, and doesn't engage with what we said. Honestly, if we didn't have a former senior public servant on our board, we'd really struggle to reach government.

My biggest satisfaction: I enjoy it when you get the opportunity to be involved and you can see the outcomes of your efforts and how you have made a difference. I don't expect public servants to do exactly what I tell them, but it's great to feel heard and know that we can have an influence.

Non-APS Personas



**Sue –
Engagement Consultant
'It's essential to our democracy'**

I am: I started out in government, but started up my own consultancy so I could focus on what I love – engagement. We're a small team of really passionate people. Any of us could have the skills to do far better paying work in some other field, but we're here because we want to make a difference.

I care about: People – and our democracy. It's so important to make sure their voices are heard to getting great policy outcomes. Our work helps rescue trust in government and democracy – which keeps falling fast. Just look at Brexit and Trump!

My experience with engagement: Where to begin! We do communications, workshops, partnerships, consultations, citizen juries, engagement platforms, world cafés ...you name it, we do it!

My biggest pain points: It's so hard to get buy-in to what we do. It's not because people are bad – they just don't know. Often they have little understanding of what we do and just got asked to do something different in their engagement, and don't buy into it much. On a few occasions, they are really keen but have totally unrealistic expectations, especially on timeframes. Or worse, they ask you to run an engagement process with real debate, but then won't accept the outputs because they actually wanted something different. I love my work, I do, but it really takes resilience. I've had to become more businesslike, just to keep my head above water sometimes!

My biggest satisfactions: When you see your client have that a-ha moment, when they understand what engagement's all about – that's the best.



Non-APS Personas



Andrew
Industry body representative
Common sense

‘Consultation isn’t a module you bolt on at the end – it’s part of the policy development process’

I am: An industry body representative. I’ve worked here for ten years, but I’ve also worked in government. I understand government needs to manage the risk of political consequences – and the institutional barriers to consultation are not insignificant.

I care about: Industry and business help drive the productivity and growth that ensure rising standards of living. We have unique access to them on the ground – including outside of capital cities. We can help ensure their perspective improves policy and programmes, and reduces the unintended consequences of regulation.

My experience with engagement: We have contacts in agencies we can call when we need to discuss a policy or programme. We write submissions to government. We are also members of standing advisory councils, and talk to public servants in ad hoc roundtables.

My biggest pain points: When consultation isn’t genuine it’s a major issue. Sometimes the timeframes are too short, or government just isn’t clear on what it’s asking us for information about, and whether there is really room to move on a policy. If there isn’t, that’s OK – we can still help with implementation. And the lack of corporate memory can be frustrating. Sometimes in a consultation, I think ‘Didn’t I already tell you this in several other consultations?’

I also think a bit more common sense would really see better results. If you want to know what people think get out and talk to them.

My biggest satisfaction: In general, government does a reasonable job of including us in policy and programmes. Having a permanent contact is invaluable – being able to pick up the phone and talk to a relevant public servant. Some of the Government’s advisory councils have worked well – with Ministers who really listen.



James
Financial sector
‘Let’s (try) to make a deal’

I am: I’ve worked in a big four bank for 12 years. We regularly have to engage with government – partly because they regulate us, and also because we share a lot of problems we could better solve together, rather than as adversaries.

I care about: I want the government to understand our point of view when considering regulation – what we do is in the national interest, even if it’s not always reported that way in the media. I also want to make deals with mutual gains. And fast. We have to move fast to make sure we get value for our shareholders.

My experience with engagement: We’re regularly in contact with agencies to make sure we can contribute to fair and proportionate regulation. We’re always listening for a possible deal to solve problems together. Our leaders meet them in regular and formal meetings, but we have ad hoc officer level contact too.

My biggest pain points: I know government has a lot of constraints, and at times will need to be cautious. Especially if they’re working with us – they don’t want to appear captured by who they are regulating. But sometimes, the pace isn’t fast enough to make a deal possible. Even where they agree to work with us, they often want to wait for authority for this or that step. It’s really hard to explain to my bosses, who lose patience. Maybe we could agree to a memorandum of understanding about how to take work forward?

My biggest satisfaction: When we can define from the outset the rules of playing together, and make deals that are mutually beneficial

Analysis of the non-APS personas

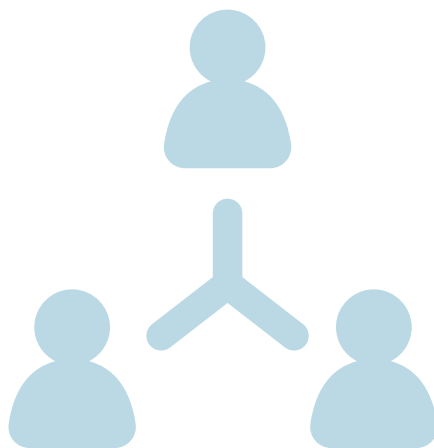
The public is not necessarily ‘stakeholders to be managed’ but people who, like public servants, are not necessarily self-interested and in fact, are motivated by very similar interests.

In particular, the public is often motivated to get involved in the APS’s work out of a spirit of ‘making a difference’ for the country. All of them attach importance to fairness, prosperity and helping out other people. They are rightfully proud of their expertise and the potential it could have to make a difference. If they are not included, they would not just be disappointed, but actually surprised and a little incredulous – they know their expertise is too good an opportunity to miss.

However, there is nuance within this motivator, and this should be factored into messaging about engagements we undertake, as well as in selecting the stakeholders to bring into our work. For example, an engagement practitioner like Sue gets motivated by ensuring that the Australian people are able to have their say on issues that matter to them. Vivienne’s not-for-profit and Andrew’s association have similar interests: ensuring their constituents’ voice is heard, and that an issue of importance to the public gets proper attention. James from the finance sector, and Andrew the industry representative, see increasing economic prosperity and making sure ‘everything works’ as a major motivation to engage. And Philippa the academic takes pride in her capacity to apply her life’s work to get better outcomes and help resolve controversies.





If the public is to play a better role in the APS’s work, public servants need to be mindful of the constraints each persona is under and their unique needs. For example, James’ bank has significant resources and expertise that could be brought to bear on tough problems – but he will need a process that moves fast because that is what his managers and shareholders demand. Industry reps like Andrew, and not for profits like Vivienne might have more time, especially since a major part of their work is trying to influence government. Engagement practitioners and academics are willing to pitch in too. But they still need to get value out of their interactions. They are all busy people who need to make a living. They do not want to feel like their time is being wasted, that they are being exploited, or they are being made to jump through a hoop – they have better things to do. Getting the basics right with them is crucial to dispel scepticism and get the trust that will drive better contributions and relationships.

Although it is a fairly straightforward point, it is worth emphasising that the personas have different kinds of expertise they can add into the APS’s work. Some can help more with technical expertise, others with getting buy-in to our work. Public servants should be aware of what each can offer, and should tailor engagement with them accordingly. In particular, they should be aiming to involve them in solving problems their expertise is suited for, rather than going for catch-all or one size fits all approaches to cover all bases.



Personas – APS staff

We segmented APS staff into four personas: Cate, Steven, Ben and Emily.

Ben Innovator, visionary Disillusioned, but still open to change	Emily Early adopter Advanced engager	Cate early majority pragmatist ‘Give me something that works’	Steven late majority Do it right
			

We chose these segments because acknowledge that different public servants have different needs and design solutions must be tailored to these. In particular, they show public servants have diverse:

- understandings of what public participation is;
- needs and motivations to undertake public participation;
- constraints and authorising environments to navigate; and
- as a result, will likely adopt public participation into their work at different (though predictable) rates.

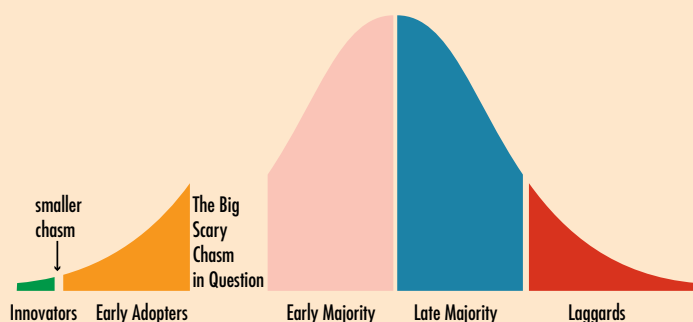
This final point is particularly important. Adoption by public servants will be crucial to the success of any framework or solution design. After all, as noted above, public participation and related frameworks are not new. Indeed, while awareness may be patchy, many users in the APS and the public know about at least the basics. Others would agree, in principle, that it is a good idea. Yet it has failed to become standard practice in the APS, or become widely diffused in other jurisdictions – its benefits remain hidden in plain sight. Our design solutions should include strategies that aspire to build a critical mass of public participation users that will lead to public participation becoming widespread and a routine part of business.

Geoffrey Moore’s “Crossing the chasm” contends that users will adopt innovation like public participation at different rates and for different reasons, and marketing should be planned accordingly

According to Moore, the marketer should focus on one group of customers at a time, using each group as a base for marketing to the next group. The most difficult step is making the transition between visionaries (early adopters) and pragmatists (early majority). This is the chasm that he refers to. If a successful firm can create a bandwagon effect in which enough momentum builds, then the product becomes a de facto standard.

Crossing the Chasm

Geoffrey Moore – 1991



APS Personas



Ben

Assistant Manager Policy Area

Disillusioned, but still open to change

‘If the public knows you’re going to treat their information with contempt or ignore it, why would they put in the effort?’

I am: I have worked in line agencies for over 10 years. I entered the public service as an APS 5, after working a year with an industry association. I have a Bachelor of Commerce from the University of Wollongong.

I care about: Public sector innovation – it’s crucial to us remaining advisers of choice to the government. And engaging the public is crucial to innovation. Talking to the actual people who we’re designing policy for is common sense, and we cannot just delegate that to the Communications Branch. But we don’t do it this way. The APS is too risk averse. We’re not given responsibility and treated like adults. I’m not allowed to engage stakeholders with autonomy – even my director isn’t. It is almost always elevated to SES levels. How is the junior staff ever going to learn to talk to stakeholders if this remains the culture?

My experience with engagement: I have run some internal roundtables, one on one meetings with industry associations, running a focus group with the help of the Communications branch.

My biggest pain points: I hate the hierarchical nature of public service. If you have an idea, or want to do something different, like talk to a real person, the layers of bureaucracy stifle it. You can’t really make a change. It’s crazy, sometimes, because you know the engagement is likely to be sub-par, you want to make it better. But you can’t, you just have to do things as it’s always been done, no matter how much you know the plan isn’t going to work. When I was new I used to try to do things differently. But now I know it can be a bit career limiting.

My biggest satisfaction: When we can do things better to how it’s always been, and can just use common sense in our work. For example, I was the first person in my branch to suggest we use a Kanban wall to organise our work. It’s a new idea sure, but it’s just common sense. You have to have a way to create a better understanding of the branch’s workflow. My manager listened to me, and gave it a go.



Emily

General Manager Policy & Programme

Advanced engager

‘There needs to be an openness about exploring a problem together – willingness to experiment, engage and invite other people into public policy’

I am: I joined the APS as a graduate and have worked in both central and line agencies. I am passionate about the work of government and I want to make a difference. I am very committed to improving the lives of Australians and I see that there is scope to do things differently and more effectively.

I care about: People – my staff, my peers, and end users. I care about the programme I work on and I want to make things better for users. I know that we can do things better. I care about my reputation and I work hard to provide the evidence to make changes. I enjoy politics, art and literature. I have a mild coffee habit.

My experience with engagement: I have run roundtables, co-design workshops, IDCs, focus groups, and workshops with businesses and peak bodies.

My biggest pain point: People who won’t try new things, or take risks. To innovate, you have to experiment and be willing to fail. That’s how you learn and create! Attitude is key, and how hard it is to do things differently – getting traction is so hard.

My biggest satisfaction: Undertaking a co-design workshop with members of the public and the government to design a programme that will meet the needs of the public. The public then progressed their ideas further by working closely with consultants. These ideas will now be presented to the Minister. The process of getting this up and running was very challenging. My team and I were met with a lot of resistance. People in government complained about the long process being such a waste of time, without yielding a better outcome. But we got through it in the end.

APS Personas



Cate

Senior Policy Manager

Give me something that works

'Is it worth it on a cost benefit basis?'

I am: A senior manager in a policy area. I've worked in central and line agencies over 25 years in the public service. I entered as a graduate (my dad was a senior public servant) with an Arts/Law (Hons) degree. I've worked in policy units and high profile policy taskforces, and did a postgraduate MBA and later a doctorate in economics.

I care about: Influencing policy – and that means being practical. Understanding the policy context and authorising environment, understanding the parameters and expectations of senior people, and working hard. I like mentoring younger and hungry staff – I used to be more idealistic like them, and I like helping them understand their working environment so they can reach their potential.

My experience with engagement: I represent the department at IDCs, formal stakeholder councils, roundtables and advisory committees. I once ran a Business Council Secretariat.

My biggest pain points: I have responsibility for important and sensitive work. I'm happy to try things differently and engage the public, but I hate thought bubbles and fads and when anyone proposes something but isn't willing to take things through to completion. We need to make sure it will not expose my minister to problems, or be perceived as such. Anything less might see the Department lose the Office's trust, and make it very difficult to achieve useful reform.

My biggest satisfaction: When a brief, cabinet submission or correspondence have gone up the line on time, and we've consulted widely, communicated the content well and we get authority to go ahead.



Steven

Middle Manager Programme

Do it right

'If it's not broke don't fix it'

I am: I have been a public servant for 15 years. I have been working in my current area for five years and I consider myself as having an in depth understanding of the programme. I see myself as reliable, dependable and trustworthy. I know what works.

I care about: doing my job well and my reputation. I liked to create a safe, productive, and predictable team environment. The right process and procedures are important to me. I have confidence in tried and true methods and I understand the importance of managing risk.

My biggest pain points: I feel uncomfortable with activities that vary from the normal process. I get annoyed by fads. I need strong evidence of the benefit to doing things differently.

My biggest satisfaction: is getting the job done on time and on budget, meeting the needs of clients and being recognised for my work by senior management.

My experience with engagement: I provide good support to senior management when they engage with stakeholders. I have a good relationship with service delivery staff who deal directly with our users.

Analysis of APS personas

In principle, all of our APS personas are interested in more and better public participation. While it may seem surprising to some outsiders, it is in fact intuitive to them that ‘two heads are better than one’ and that the APS doesn’t have all the answers. Indeed, they all think consultation is important, and have plenty of experience in it. It will not be too difficult to convince them that, in principle, there could be improvements to APS information sharing and consultation, especially to improve on the basics. Often these engagements do not meet their needs, either.

The problem for each is they don’t necessarily have trust and confidence in alternative approaches, or sometimes are not even aware that something different is possible. They do rightfully see themselves as experts, and servants of the government of the day, so they do not want to hand over control of all their work. For Cate and Steven in particular, consultation is more about buy-in, and the expertise of the public might be a resource that is hidden in plain sight, obscured by authorising environments and (reasonable) perceptions of risk and impracticality.

Crucially, they have different risk appetites when it comes to adopting new processes and new behaviours – which is precisely what they’ll have to do if more public participation is to occur. This should inform any strategies to encourage adoption, and messaging about public participation.

For example, Emily and Ben, as early adopters and the innovators, are most open to consider undertaking more advanced public participation that does not yet have ‘programme guidelines’ or a policy to set out exactly how it should go, like participatory budgeting or a citizen jury. So initial efforts to establish more advanced participation would be best attempted with public servants like them, at first. On the downside, although they have good experience from previous engagements and a lot of goodwill, they may have less influence and

capability to execute such engagements, compared to Cate or Steven, and will need help.

Cate and Steven are more interested in something that ‘works’. They favour useability over functionality. Cate, in particular, is not irreconcilably against using different public participation in her work, or against innovation. But neither wants a process that has doubtful outcomes, ambiguous and unpredictable steps, or no precedent – at least compared to what they are familiar with. They will need some decent proof that public participation can work before they are willing to risk their Department’s and their own hard won reputations trying it. Success from Emily and Ben will go a long way to convincing Cate that public participation is not a fad, and can add value to her work.

Cate is a pragmatist, but unlike Steven, may not require a fully complete public participation ‘solution’ to get started. While awaiting successes with advanced engagement from Emily and Ben, Cate might be persuaded to undertake reasonably advanced public participation in her work, which might also build her trust and confidence to try more and encourage her colleagues to do the same. Cate is also very capable: With her experience and knowledge, she has could execute difficult participation in an APS environment, with its particular constraints.

Persuading a public servant like Cate that the public is an underutilised resource will be crucial to public participation’s long term success. If Cate uses public participation successfully, and is encouraged to do more of it by successes from Emily and Ben, it will have valuable spillover effects. She is a leader in the public service, highly respected by senior public servants, and many of her peers aspire to be like her. People like Steven see her as a ‘reference customer’ – that is, if APS staff like Cate start doing more and better public participation, APS staff like Steven are very likely to see it not only as possible, but a requirement.

HOW DOES THE APS ENGAGE THE COMMUNITY



Information Sharing



Websites



Media



Socia Media



Consultation



Feedback Channels



Forum



Submissions



Deliberation



Feedback Channels



Forum



Submissions



Colaboration



Workshops



Forums



Submissions

How does the APS engage the community?

We conducted a survey to stocktake current approaches to public participation across APS departments. The survey was a required output for the Discover milestone, under Australia's Open Government National Action Plan. It also adds a quantitative layer of information to the user interviews.

For the most part the findings from the survey support the insights from the user research. The APS engages the community in a wide variety of ways, with the majority of approaches focussed on information sharing and consultations. Respondents identified the "authorising environment" as a key barrier to more open engagement. This was followed by a lack of trust in the ability of stakeholders to engage in a constructive way and a lack of awareness amongst public servants of different approaches and their value.

The survey asked departments three questions:

- What does your organisation do to engage with the public? Respondents were also asked to categorise their engagements using the Ontario framework (i.e. into information sharing, consultation, deliberation and collaboration).
- Do you perceive any barriers to your organisation co-designing with the public? If so, what are they, and how can your organisation overcome them?
- How could you improve on your current engagement approach?

A copy of the survey is at Appendix B.

The responses indicate:

- The APS engages the public in a wide variety of ways.
- The majority of APS engagement is information sharing and consultation.

- Many engagements are transactional in nature, rather than ongoing.
- Although it has many legitimate barriers to undertaking more meaningful engagement, the APS believes that its engagement could improve

These responses are consistent with most of the user interview themes, and support the hypothesis that there is an opportunity for departments to better access the expertise in the community to deliver better policies and programmes.

In particular, the responses to the first question suggest awareness and practical experience of collaboration and deliberation are patchy (APS Theme 1). In addition, the transactional nature of engagements suggest APS engagement emphasises obtaining buy-in rather than gathering expertise (APS Theme 2).



But many of the information sharing and consultation engagements employed by the APS, as well as the variety of practices cited within these categories, suggest good engagement capability and potential. Similarly, the opportunities for improvement cited by respondents (Question 3) were thoughtful, and also indicate that the APS has more potential in engagement than they are able to apply in reality. This is consistent with there being a gap between what the APS knows, and what it actually does in respect of engaging the public (APS Theme 3); as well as that traditional consultation processes providing the base skills needed to engage in more deliberate or collaborative engagements (APS Theme 5).

The responses also indicate that the APS could be interested in public participation that responds to non-APS theme 4 (undertaking more advanced collaborative and deliberate engagements and building ongoing relationships with the public) and non-APS theme 5 (improving the basics in engagement).

However, respondents also noted many barriers to engagement in response to question 2. This is consistent with APS Theme 4 (internal processes, including parliamentary and legal, can act as a barrier/constraint to achieving best practice engagement). These barriers should be taken into account in designing ways to improve public participation.

Summary of key findings: Survey question – Types of engagement approach

Thirteen APS departments were surveyed to understand the current approaches to engagement and participation across the APS. The departments were asked to divide their examples of engagement approaches into four categories. These were:

- **Share:** How do you share information with the public?
- **Consult:** How do you gather feedback from the public about a problem?
- **Deliberate:** How do you gather help from the public to solve a problem?
- **Collaborate:** How do you gather help from the public to implement a solution?

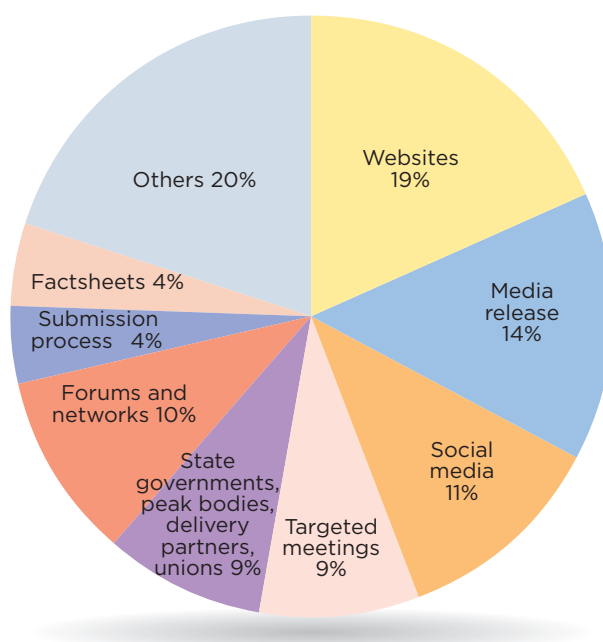
These four categories were adopted from the Ontario Provincial government's framework (our initial 'working' framework). Each category included two practical examples as guidance to respondents.

Share results: How is information shared with the public

The respondents provided 72 examples of sharing information with the public. The examples indicate that the APS shares information with the public in a wide variety of ways, including:

- 19% through the department's website or less commonly the website of another government agency and peak bodies;
- 14% through media releases; and
- 11% through social media, including Facebook, Twitter, You Tube and webinars.

SHARE



Analysis: This indicates a willingness of the APS to match the channels of communication to the ways that people are increasingly consuming information; and a willingness to tailor communication to different audiences.

Consult results: How is feedback gathered from the public about a problem

The respondents provided 70 examples of consulting the public. These included:

- 15% through feedback mechanisms such as filling in forms, calling on a phone hotline, complaining on the department's website, or just directly meeting departmental staff;
- 14% through community reference groups, industry forums,;
- 13% via formal submission processes where a consultation and discussion paper was released by the organisation, and stakeholders required to respond;
- 12% through targeted meetings with stakeholders; and
- 9% through survey responses from the public.

Analysis: The more common ways the APS consults the public are predominantly transactional and static by nature. That is, they are not interactive and do not tend to build ongoing dialogue or relationships.



CONSULT



Deliberate results: How is help gathered from the public to solve a problem

The respondents cited 39 examples of deliberating with the public. These included:

- 23% through established groups, forums and round tables;
- 13% via established feedback mechanisms;
- 13% through formal submission processes;
- 8% through online platforms, workshops or hackathons, and market research; and
- 7% through social media.

Analysis: According to the survey, the APS utilises many of the same engagement practices when they are seeking assistance to identify or solve a problem, as they do when they are seeking feedback. While groups/forums/roundtables are structures that can be utilised to deliberate on issues, many of the other approaches identified are predominantly one way, such as feedback, market research, surveys. This brings into question the degree of deliberation that is truly occurring.

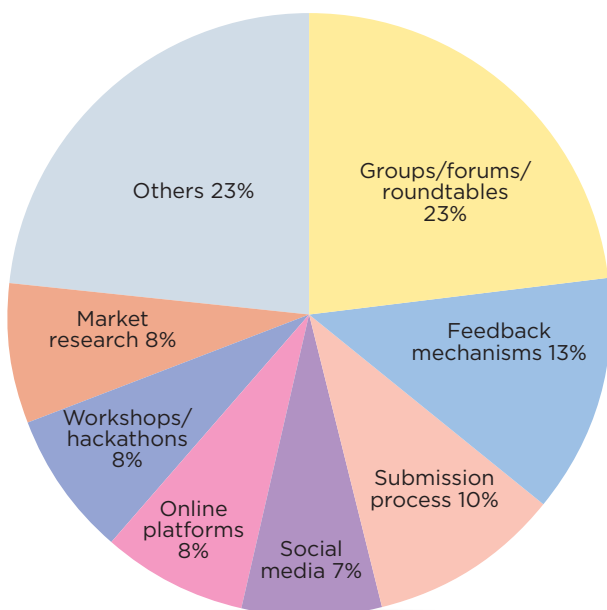
Collaborate results: How is help gathered from the public to implement a solution

The respondents provided 34 examples of collaboration with the public. These include:

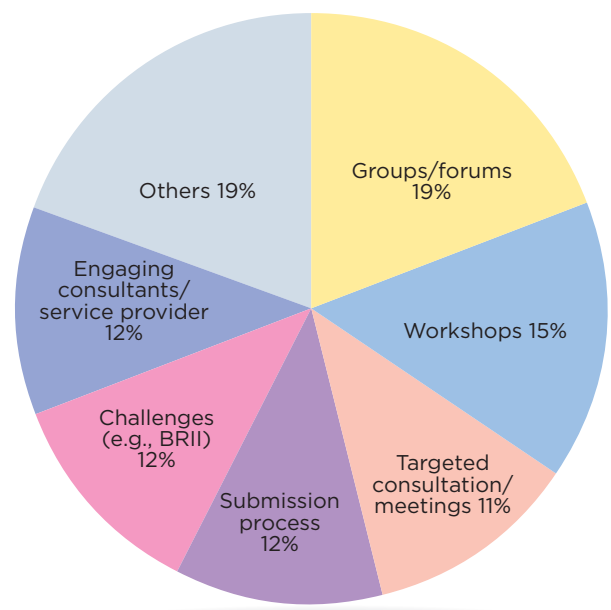
- 19% through established groups and forums;
- 15% via workshops;
- 12 % through formal submission processes, engaging a consultant or service provider, and challenges such as the Business Research and Innovation Initiative (BRII); and
- 11% through targeted consultations or meetings.

Analysis: The relatively high reliance on static processes, such as consultants, submissions and targeted consultations, potentially brings into question the level of understanding around collaborative processes and the degree to which they are genuinely utilised.

Deliberate



Collaborate



Implications from survey question 1 – Types of engagement approach

More than half of the departments did not differentiate between information sharing/consultation, versus deliberation and collaboration. The results demonstrates a tendency for 'one size fits all' type models irrespective of the nature of the problem or opportunity. There is a lack of awareness of public participation process beyond information sharing and consultation. This is consistent with the findings from the user interviews with APS staff.

There is a greater emphasis on more transactional and passive practices for engaging the community (e.g., feedback and formal submission processes). This may simply reflect the degree to which the APS share information and consult. Alternatively it could mean, the APS is missing out on opportunities to engage more effectively due to this over reliance on more traditional modes of communication.

Key findings: Survey question – Barriers to engagement

The majority of the respondents cited the 'authorising environment' as a recurring barrier, which prevented more meaningful consultation with the public. Respondents referred to the 'authorising environment' as:

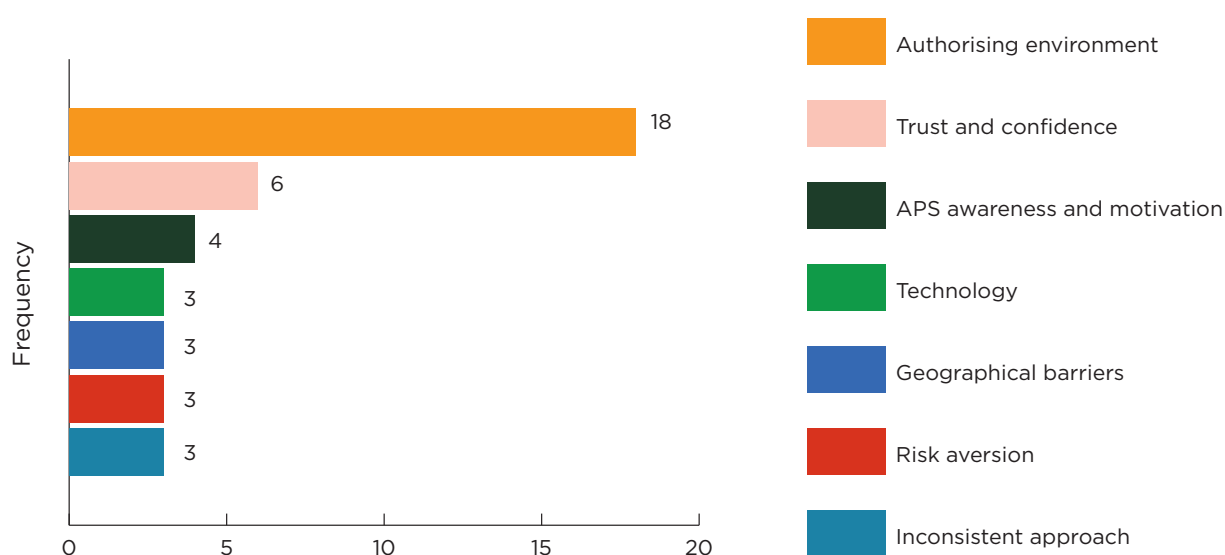
- insufficient time and resources;
- pressures from budget cycles;
- political sensitivities;

- inability to share information due to confidentiality; and
- lack of capacity to travel and spend time in regional and country areas.

A lack of trust and confidence in the ability of stakeholders to engage in a constructive way was the second most cited barrier. The respondents expressed that, often stakeholders had vested interests that impacted their objectivity, and could be too passionate with strong views, and divergent ideas. This can lead to difficulty in managing their expectations.

The respondents also recognised the importance of raising APS awareness, by providing appropriate training opportunities to design sophisticated engagement practices. The respondents suggested improving APS motivation to engage with the public. To achieve this, the APS must understand the potential benefits of better engagement, and have the appropriate incentives to engage in meaningful consultations.

Barriers



Implications

The authorising environment places constraints on more deliberative and collaborative type engagement approaches. In many instances this is appropriate, and even unavoidable. For example, when information is politically sensitive or ‘cabinet in confidence’, and cannot be disclosed, or when legal requirements demand a quicker turnaround. However, we need to ensure we strike an appropriate balance between respecting legitimate constraints, and aspects that are in our control.

Key findings: Survey question – Potential improvements to engagement

The respondents identified a number ways to improve APS engagement with the public.

The key improvements include:

- building relationships with the public;
- applying more advanced methodologies;
- making changes to the ‘authorising environment’; and
- creating more opportunities to co-design with the public.

Building relationships

Respondents identified a number of areas of improvement in order to build ongoing relationship with the public. These include:

- earlier and more frequent engagement;
- more sustained and systematic ‘town hall’ type engagements;
- closing the loop and keeping the public informed; and
- culturally appropriate engagement approaches.

Advanced methodologies

Improvements to advanced methodologies related to improving the process or methodology of the engagement itself and included:

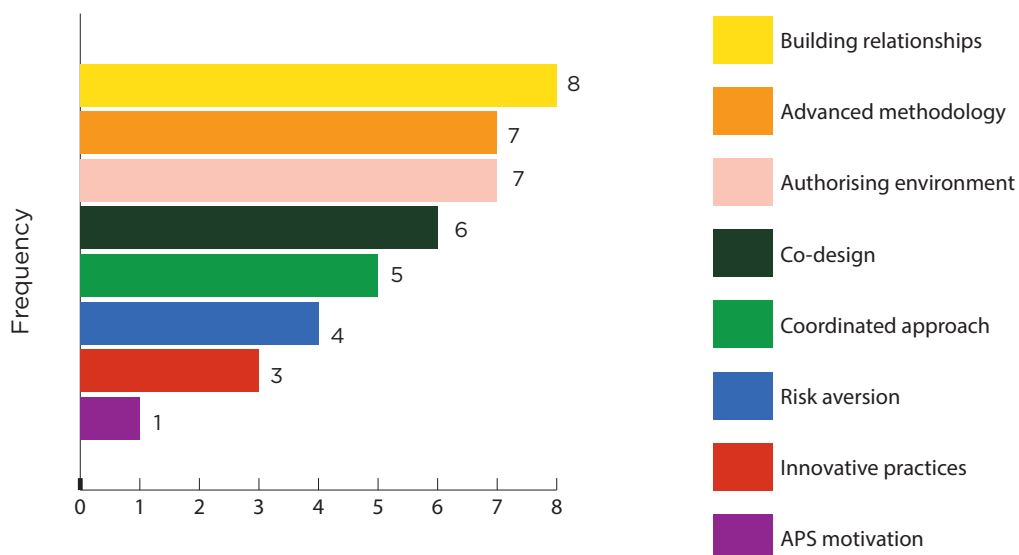
- engagements that are more representative of the population;
- more accessible to the public;
- clear and concise in its presentation to the public;
- having dedicated engagement officers;
- engaging with stakeholders more strategically and proactively; and
- implementing an evaluation process to obtain feedback.

Authorising environment

Respondents described authorising environment to include:

- Limited time to undertake engagement with the public;
- managing political sensitivities;
- inability to share information due to confidentiality;
- limited authority of APS staff to make decisions and commit to actions; and
- lack of a whole of APS environment to facilitate deeper engagement with the public.

Potential Improvement



Co-design opportunities

The respondents perceived the opportunity to co-design with the public as a way to develop deeper understanding of end users. Similarly, respondents expressed that testing ideas with end users, through ongoing trusted stakeholder forums would help ensure that policy aligns with user needs.

However, respondents are pragmatic and recognised that feasibility of a co-design model will need to be assessed on a case by case basis.

Coordinated and systematic approach

Respondents observed a need to create a coordinated and systematic approach to engagement, both within an organisation and across the APS. This would increase collaboration, create consistency, encourage partnerships, and reduce duplication and consultation fatigue for stakeholders. To achieve this, it was suggested that a central stakeholder engagement strategy may be helpful.

Implications

Consistent with the APS user research, there appears to be a knowing/doing gap between what the respondents know on sharing information and consultation, and what they are actually doing in practice. When asked what their organisation can improve, they demonstrated an understanding of what a good methodology looks like.

Respondents suggested the following:

- engaging with stakeholders earlier;
- having stakeholders involved in identifying the problem, and designing the solution;
- being proactive in seeking feedback from stakeholders;
- closing the loop;
- moving away from engaging in 'default' behaviour;
- undertaking user research; and
- reducing consultation fatigue by ensuring there is more collaboration across government.

In practice though, only two of the departments had an example about engaging in deliberative practices. Only one department could potentially fall into the category of engaging in collaborative practices.



Survey Summary

For the most part the findings from the survey support the insights developed from the user research. The APS engages the community in a wide variety of ways, with the majority of approaches focussed on information sharing and consultations.

The APS does undertake deliberative and collaborative engagements, interestingly many of the channels used to consult are also used to deliberate and collaborate.

Respondents identified the “authorising environment” as a key barrier to more open engagement. This was followed by a lack of trust in the ability of stakeholders to engage in a constructive way and a lack of awareness amongst public servants of different approaches and their value.

Departments were able to identify a range of potential improvements covering improving relationships, applying more advanced methodologies and creating more opportunities to co-design. The suggested improvements underlines the fact that the APS does understand what is required to undertake meaningful engagement with the community we simply do not practice this often enough.

The survey provides a quantitative way of testing the findings from the user research, confirming much of the user research. It also provides practical examples that will support the development of design questions in the define stage.



Chapter three: Define

What are the opportunities for solutions in the Create phase?

An APS wide framework could build trust and confidence by assisting public servants to: diagnose the nature of the challenge before them and apply the right approach for engaging the community that matches the problem; get the basics right from the start when they engage; better understand the benefits of accessing expertise in the community; and better navigate internal processes. Importantly making better use of the expertise in the community will require many public servants to think differently about their roles and the role of the community in the work of government.

To this end, we have design questions and stimulus to form the platform on which we can develop interesting and innovative ways to improve APS public participation, as well as develop a framework that our users value.

“

The scientist is not a person who gives the right answers, but the one who asks the right questions.”

Claude Lévi-Strauss

“There are no right answers to wrong questions.”

Ursula K. Le Guin

Chapter process overview

The Problem Identification stage defined what the real issue we're trying to solve is.

The Empathise stage explores why this issue occurs – discovering users' explicit and implicit needs so they can be met through design solutions.

Now we have a rich and nuanced problem to solve, and have a deep understanding of our users, we can define our opportunities for how we solve the problem. These opportunities are our design questions – thoughtful and thought provoking questions that can help us come up with solutions that mean public participation is no longer hidden in plain sight.

Analysing the problem identification and empathise stages (chapters 1 and 2)

The aim of the research conducted for this report was twofold, firstly to test the proposition that the APS was missing out on opportunities to solve complex problems and build trust in decisions by not effectively accessing the available expertise within the community. Secondly, if this was true, to test the hypothesis that this was due to a lack of awareness, confidence and capability.

The analysis in this report shows that the APS does engage with the community in a variety of ways. More deliberative or collaborative practices are very patchy across the APS with the more common approaches being information sharing and consultation. The research clearly shows that the APS is missing out on opportunities to better engage the community and the expertise they hold. This was reflected in the user research and acknowledged by departments in the survey of current practice as an area for improvement.

Why these opportunities are not being seized is a little more interesting. It is fair to say that the research does support the hypothesis that opportunities are being missed due to a lack of awareness, trust and capability, but there is more to it.

The research has shown that for many in the APS engaging the community is about gaining buy in for decisions that may have already been made. For some in the APS the perceived risks involved and resources required in engaging the community in more meaningful ways outweighs the return. Moreover, many do not trust the community to be able to engage with issues in a constructive way to deliver a sensible and considered outcome.

The user research and the survey showed that the APS is rightly constrained on occasion by legal and parliamentary requirements, a point that was understood and appreciated by those outside the APS.

From the perspective of the community, they see that they do have expertise to offer and that it is in the interest of everyone for that expertise to be

used. They can be sceptical of the motivations of government and frustrated when the basics of good engagement are not followed (time, scope, closing the loop, clarity of purpose and authority).

Interestingly the issue of intent and the fundamentals are connected. Sometimes the basics are not followed due to outside constraints, other times because people are unaware and on some occasions because the intention was not to engage in a meaningful way. This can also reflect a reoccurring issue across the research, of a knowing doing gap. Many public servants are aware of what is involved in good engagement but this is not reflected in their practice.

Two key themes have emerged through the research, trust and confidence. If the APS is to take better advantage of the opportunities presented by greater utilisation of the expertise available in the community they will need to build greater trust and confidence in the relationship with the community. The APS will also need to build trust and confidence in the many varied processes for engaging the community in a meaningful way.

An APS wide framework could build trust and confidence by assisting public servants to: diagnose the nature of the challenge before them and apply the right approach for engaging the community that matches the problem; get the basics right from the start when they engage; better understand the benefits of accessing expertise in the community; and better navigate internal processes.





Importantly making better use of the expertise in the community will require many public servants to think differently about their roles and the role of the community in the work of government.

This gives rise to the following design questions that will form the basis for the create phase in this project:

- How might we help public servants to select the right way to engage the public for the challenge before them?
- How can we assist the APS to see the benefits from engaging the expertise of the community?
- How can we help the APS to get the basics of engagement right?
- How might we re-think critical business processes to better reflect the importance of community expertise?
- How might we re-imagine public servant roles such as policy officer to make better use of community expertise?
- How might we shift incentives to better encourage the development of the skills needed to tap community expertise?

BRII

As outlined in the report, technology has the potential to make a significant impact on the way the community is engaged. In this context there is cause for optimism in what may be achieved through the BRII challenge. It will be important that if the technological solution that is developed through the BRII challenge is shown to be beneficial, that it is widely adopted.

Quick Wins

Every agency in the APS has key stakeholders and different ways of engaging those stakeholders. The research has shown that these relationships can be transactional, made up of a series of single issue interactions. This does not necessarily need to be the case. A quick win from this research could be for department's to assess the nature of the relationship with key stakeholders and to see to the extent possible that they could be move to more of a partnership model. To see the extent to which the nature of the engagement could move from a transactional footing to more on an on-going dialogue. WA Partnerships presents one viable model for such a relationship.

Design Questions – Ideation Platforms

The insights generated from the research have identified a number of challenges faced by people involved in participation and engagement activities. The “How might we...” design questions transfer the challenges into opportunities for design. The questions will become the launch pads for ideas in the Create phase. The following design questions all relate to challenges identified through the research and should, in some, way address the two key themes of trust and confidence.

We have also mapped our design questions against our themes, to show the basis on which they were developed (Appendix D).

Horses for Courses

How might we help public servants to select the right way to engage the public for the challenge before them?

The research indicates that public servant are not necessarily analysing the nature of the challenges before them and applying the most appropriate engagement to make best use of the expertise within the community. Information sharing and consultation are the go to engagement methods which is leading to a more transactional relationship with the community and lost opportunities.

A better appreciation of the nature of the problem will assist public servants to make more informed decisions on how they engage the community.

In developing ideas from this question consideration will need to be given to the external constraints on public servants and the multitude of ways that the community can be effectively engaged. Consideration will also need to be given to the possibility of problems being misdiagnosed due to the perceived effort required in engaging the community in more meaningful ways.

Return on Investment

How can we assist the APS to see the benefits from meaningful engagement with the community?

Increasingly the challenges facing public servants cannot be effectively addressed without help. To bring others into the problem solving process requires public servants to first see that their effort involved in meaningful engagement is worth the investment. The research also indicated that obtaining buy in from the community is a key consideration for many public servants but the use of traditional information sharing and consultation methods limits the potential to create shared understanding and commitment.

There is considerable potential for the development of better policy and programmes if the APS can meaningfully engage the expertise that exists in the community. Moreover the holders of this expertise in the community are willing and able to assist and they are cognisant of the constraints on public servants.



It will be important to not lose sight of the fact that not all issues require engagement with the community. The research has identified a knowing doing gap within the public service, so many will understand the benefits but perhaps they do not feel the investment is warranted.

Back to Basics

How can we help the APS to get the basics of engagement right?

The research has shown that there is a gap between what public servants know about good engagement and what they actually do in practice. Sometimes this is due to a concern about the risk of applying more open engagement methods, other times it is due to a lack of capability or understanding. A lack of transparency and the inability to close the loop in engagements leads to a level of frustration with stakeholders and on occasion cynicism.

There is an opportunity to shift the nature of the relationship with the community and make the expertise they hold easier to access by ensuring that when engaging the community that the APS gets the basics right every time. The community is pragmatic and realistic with an appreciation of the constraints on the APS which should give the APS greater confidence in being open and transparent with the community when they can and explain why when they can't.

The research clearly shows that there is a high level of mistrust with much of the current government engagement which means that engagements often fail to make the most of the community's expertise. Importantly the community believe that getting the basics right is crucial to building trust and forms the building blocks for more advanced engagements.

In generating ideas from this question it will be important to keep in mind the interconnectedness

of the issues in this area. Like the community public servants are pragmatic, they operate under certain constraints and the research shows that they do not universally appreciate the value in engaging with the community in more open ways. These realities will need to be considered when developing solutions.

Breaking the Wheel

How might we re-think critical business processes to better reflect the importance of community expertise?

The research has shown that some of the internal processes to government such as parliamentary, security and legal requirements do not necessarily align well with more open forms of dialogue with the community. The survey of departments expanded on this point when identifying barriers and areas for improvement and included issues such as limited authority to make decisions or take actions, time constraints, engagement of senior staff, and a culture of risk aversion which requires 'nearly developed answers' before going out to the public.

It is clear from the research that many of the constraints, such as parliamentary and legal are valid and out of the control of public servants but many are not. There is a need to ensure that the constraints are valid and are the reason for limited engagement and not the excuse.

If we can find ways of helping public servants to be able to navigate this more effectively it will open up more opportunities for more meaningful engagement. Moreover, it will give public servants the confidence to be more upfront with the community on when and how they can engage, which will in turn foster greater trust. It has the potential to promote more ongoing partnerships.





What's in a Name?

How might we re-imagine public servant roles such as policy officer to make better use of community expertise?

The research suggests that many public servants need to re-imagine the way they think about their role and the role of those who hold expertise in the community. Their professional identity is a key driver of behaviours and can have a significant impact on the way we interact. The research would suggest that some public servants do not access the expertise in the community because they do not value that expertise, this is in part because they see themselves as the holders of the more relevant expertise.

A re-imagining of the role of a public servant and their professional identity could lead to more effective engagement with the community.

The research was clear that the non APS are looking to form more meaningful and on-going relationships with the APS. If we were to reconsider the role of a public servant to be more of a connector to expertise, interpreter of that expertise and navigator of government process, this could provide the basis for more of a partnership approach with the community leading to a more effective engagement with the community and better outcomes.

Reward for Effort

How might we shift incentives to better encourage the development of the skills needed to tap community expertise?

Both the user research and stocktake show that there appears to be a knowing/doing gap between what public servants know on sharing information and consultation, and what they do in practice. This gap would appear, in part, to be due to a lack of incentives and capability.

APS users identified a lack of capability as an issue but they also wanted to undertake more meaningful engagement. There was also a recognition that on many occasions the basics, such as closing the loop, are not done well by public servants. This impacts on both trust and confidence in the government decision making.

Recruitment, promotion and rewards systems are key drivers for change. If we can augment these processes to reflect the importance of engaging the community we will both enhance capability across the APS and incentivise public servants to engage with community in more meaningful ways. Changing the incentives structure will also provide motivation for public servants to recognise the value of the expertise held in the community and the confidence to access that expertise.

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Appendices

Including

Appendix A: Project context

Appendix B: Public participation survey questions

Appendix C: Design questions mapped against the user research themes systems map.

Appendix A – Project context

Background: The Open Government Partnership and Australia's Open Government National Action Plan.

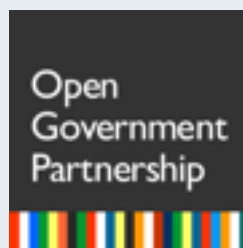
The Open Government Partnership (OGP) is a multi-lateral initiative that aims to secure concrete commitments from governments to advance open government efforts. It has over 75 members including the United States, United Kingdom, Canada and New Zealand.

In November 2015, Australia reaffirmed its commitment to join the OGP. Every two years, OGP members must work with the public to transparently and publicly co-create a National Action Plan. Action plans are the driving device for the OGP. They are the instrument through which government and the public develop their 'commitments', that is, their agreed reforms.

In December 2016, the Commonwealth Government released Australia's first Open Government National Action Plan (the Plan) and its 15 commitments. The Plan drew on the joint efforts of the APS and the public (including non-government organisations, business, academia and community groups). Its 15 ambitious commitments set out an agenda to promote transparency, empower citizens, fight corruption, and harness new technologies to strengthen governance.

Further information about the Open Government Partnership and Australia's National Action Plan is available on its website: <https://ogpau.pmc.gov.au/>.

Snapshot: The Open Government Partnership



- Launched in 2011
- Originally a UK/US Government initiative, with 8 countries participating
- Australia confirmed its membership in 2015
- 75 countries and 15 subnational governments now members, who have made over 2,500 commitments

Snapshot: Australia's first Open Government National Action Plan



- Drafting of Action Plan commenced in late 2015
- Supported by a consultation process to enable co-creation with the public
- Released in December 2016
- Includes 15 commitments related to public participation, accountability, transparency and open data
- Departments of Finance and Prime Minister and Cabinet are coordinating implementation of commitments

Objective: Implement Commitment 5.2 of Australia's Open Government National Action Plan – Enhancing public participation.

This project is to implement Action Plan Commitment 5.2: Enhancing public participation. Commitment 5.2 focusses on improving participation and engagement to enhance policy and service delivery outcomes. It has a broad range of impacts, and specifically advances OGP values of:

- Technology and innovation for openness and accountability: by promoting new technologies that offer opportunities for information sharing, public participation and collaboration; and making more information public in ways that enable people to both understand what their governments do and to influence decisions.
- Civic participation: by allowing further access to information to ensure meaningful input from interested members of the public into decisions; citizens' right to have their voices heard; and opening up decision making to more interested members of the public.

Detailed information about Commitment 5.2 and this project is available on:

- The Department of Industry, Innovation and Science's dedicated website: <https://www.industry.gov.au/innovation/Pages/Open-Government-Partnership-Framework-project.aspx>; and
- Australia's Open Government National Action Plan webpage: <https://ogpau.pmc.gov.au/commitment/52-enhancing-public-participation>.

Commitment 5.2 – Milestones and outputs

Commitment 5.2's ambition is for the APS to design and adopt a whole-of-government framework that embeds meaningful, open, public and multi-stakeholder participation into policy development and service delivery.

The Commitment has three key milestones, each with their own outputs. This report is an output of the first milestone.

Milestone 1 (Current milestone) – Scope and outputs

Undertake and publicly release a stocktake of current approaches to public participation to determine best practice activities (including international and domestic examples, user experience research, methodologies to encourage adoption, and relevant standards, such as IAP2 values).

Milestone 2 – Scope and outputs

Work with government agencies, the public and organisations outside of government to develop and implement a whole-of-government framework (with guidance / principles and potential public participation initiatives) for improving public participation and engagement across the Commonwealth.

Milestone 3 – Scope and outputs

Undertake pilot public participation initiatives, including working with the BRIL challengers to more effectively use digital channels for engagement.

Review processes and iterate as necessary.

Methodology: User centred design, with three phases – Discover; Create; and Deliver

The Project team is implementing Commitment 5.2 using a User Centred Design (UCD) methodology. UCD is also referred to as: design thinking; human centred design; and experience architecture. It is related to systems thinking and service design.

UCD is a coherent step-by-step problem solving package, drawing on tools from fields like:

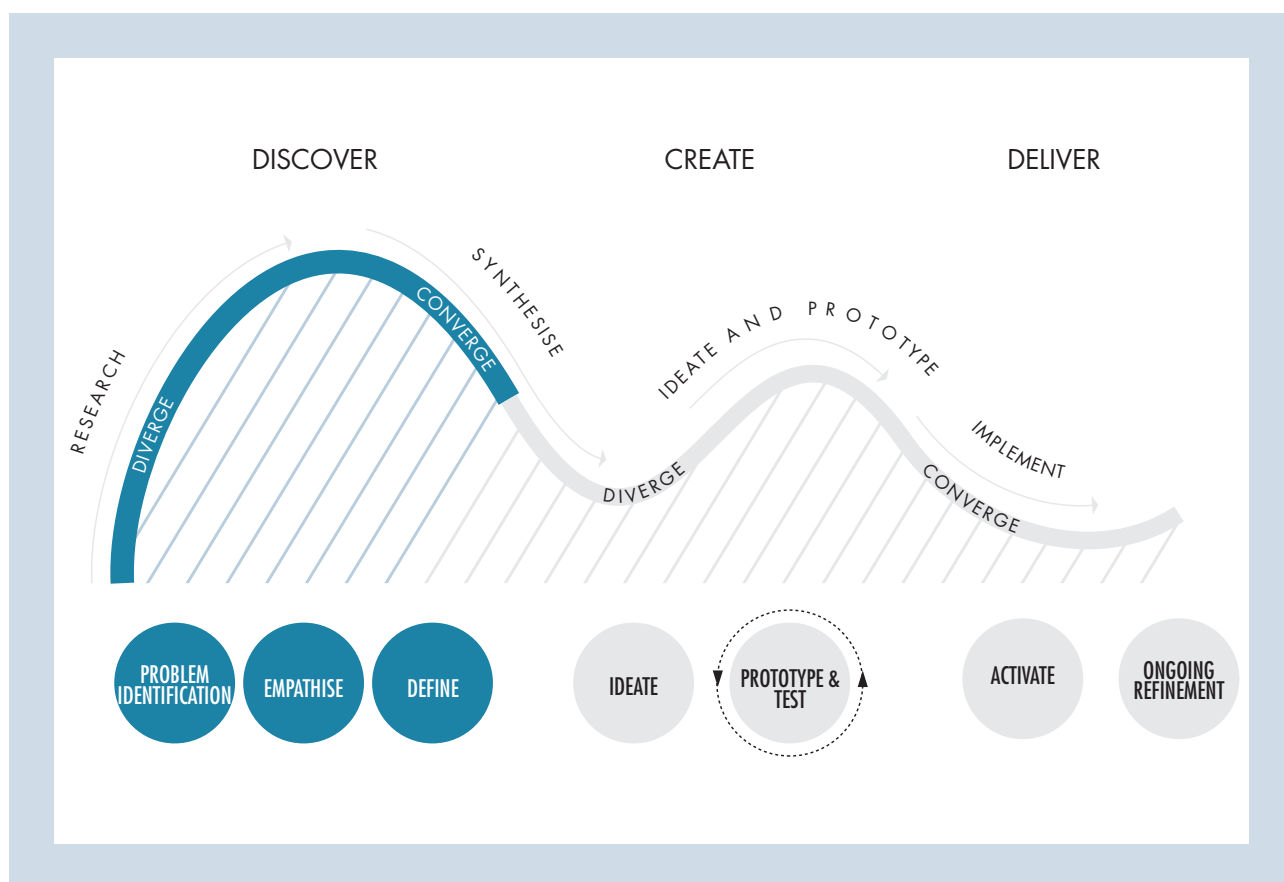
- public policy and economics (e.g. research paper and quantitative dataset analysis);
- marketing (user research, ideation);
- engineering (prototyping); and
- management consulting (collaboration and brainstorming tools).

This UCD methodology is used by Bizlab, the Department of Industry, Innovation and Science's Innovation Lab. It is adapted from resources used by Ideo, a design thinking consultancy, which are available on [designkit.org](https://www.designkit.org).

Besides including processes and tools that boost innovation, UCD ensures that users (i.e., the public) are at the centre of our work throughout the Commitment's implementation. This boosts both the quality of our work and its legitimacy.

The UCD methodology has three phases, which align with the three milestones of the Commitment 5.2 – Discover (Milestone 1); Create (Milestone 2); and Deliver (Milestone 3).

Exhibit: Bizlab's User Centred Design project methodology, with its three phases: Discover, Create and Deliver

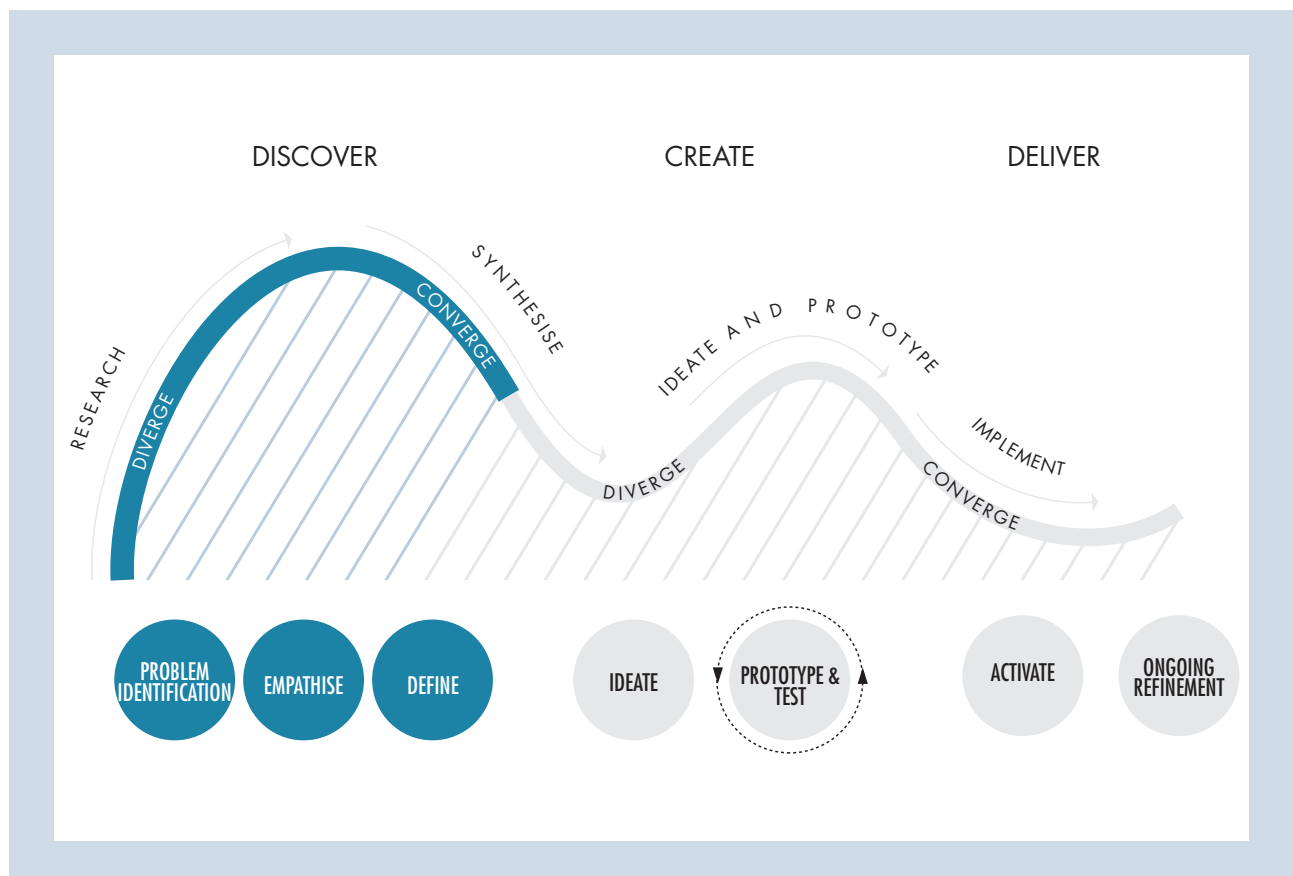


Purpose of this report: Show the findings from the Discover phase, including its three stages: Problem identification; Empathise; and Define

This report reflects the Discover phase that has the following three steps:

1. **Problem Identification stage** – where we identify the real problem we are trying to solve;
2. **Empathise stage** – where we explore user needs and motivations, to understand why the problem occurs; and
3. **Define stage** – where we identify opportunities for solutions.

Exhibit: Our report covers the Project's Discover phase, including its Problem Identification; Empathise; and Define stages



Appendix B – Public participation survey questions

Improving participation and engagement in policy development and service delivery

Summary

We want your help to undertake a stocktake of current approaches to public participation and engagement across the Australian Public Service in order to determine best practice activities. This stocktake will inform the development of an Australian Government framework for public participation and engagement.

Background

In November 2015, Australia reaffirmed its commitment to join the OGP. The Cabinet approved Australia's first Open Government National Action Plan in December 2016. The Plan contains 15 commitments that aim to advance transparency, accountability, participation and technological innovation.

Commitment 5.2 of the Action Plan works towards improving public participation and engagement to enhance policy and service delivery outcomes. Commitment 5.2's key output is to establish a new Australian Government framework for public participation and engagement.

What we need from you

Currently, we are undertaking a stocktake of existing approaches to public participation and engagement in your organisation. We want to know about the kind of engagement techniques your organisation employs, how they could be improved, and what are the challenges to achieving best practice. You can help with this by answering the questions below.

For more information on the project please visit our web page or contact us at ogp@industry.gov.au.

Questions

1. What does your organisation do to engage with the public? For more information in answering the questions below see Appendix.
 - a. Share: How does your organisation inform the public about an initiative?
 - b. Consult: How does your organisation gather feedback from the public about a problem?
 - c. Deliberate: How does your organisation gather help from the public to identify or solve a problem?
 - d. Collaborate: How does your organisation gather help from the public to find and implement a solution?
2. How could you improve on your current engagement approach?
3. Do you perceive any barriers to your organisation co-designing with the public? If so, what are they, and how can your organisation overcome them?

Share: The public receives information about a government program or decision in an accessible way. Communication is one-way to the public.

Examples:

- Business.gov.au provides information to businesses on grants and funding that is available and the process for applying.
- myVote: Provides you with interactive information cards to make Australian politics easy to read. It is fitted with geolocation and tailors information direct from your local candidates.

Consult: The public have an opportunity to weigh-in and provide their input. Participants advocate for their views on a subject.

Examples:

- When the government has formulated a policy position or draft legislation and is seeking comments on the proposed policy.
- Digital platforms, like challenge.gov, are online marketplaces where a government agency (the seeker) can post a challenge, and citizens (solvers) can suggest solutions. The agency pays for solutions that meet its criteria and are chosen as winners. The website can also match interested citizens to form problem solving teams.



Deliberate: The public help identify the issue and/or develop a strategy that the government commits to deliver. Participants take part in varying degrees to find common ground and collectively arrive at an agreement.

Examples:

- Citizens' jury are groups of randomly selected people that are representative of the broader community, who are briefed by experts regarding an issue. The South Australian government has used these to consider road safety; cat and dog management; and potential for a nuclear industry.
- The City of Gold Coast introduced the City Panel which is an on-line portal where residents can individually help shape many of the projects delivered. Mayor Tom Tate presents the draft annual \$1.4 billion city budget to the residents, through the City Panel. This gives them the chance to shape where the money is spent.

Collaborate: Participants work with government to define an issue, develop and deliver solutions. Participants share decision-making and implementation of solutions.

Examples:

- The Canadian government recently worked with the public to review the Condominium Act, identify issues and develop long-term solutions. The solutions developed were used in a new law – the Protecting Condominium Owners Act. The law provides condo owners, condo tenants, condo boards, and others with the tools needed to govern their own condo.
- California and Switzerland have systems where citizens can propose new laws as petitions. If the petition receives enough votes, it goes to a referendum where it can be approved as a law by popular vote and the Parliament is bound by the outcome.

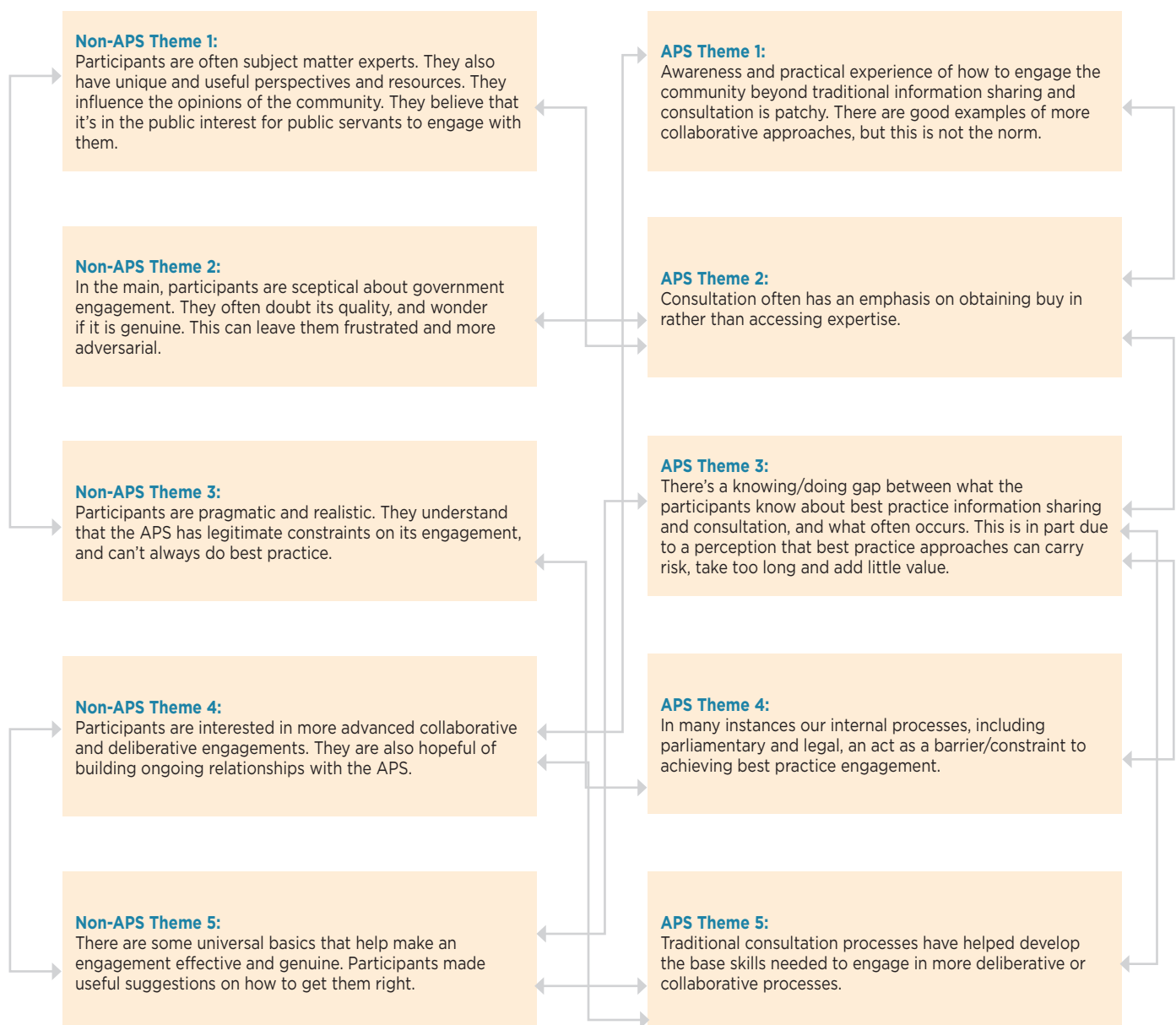


Appendix C – Design questions mapped against the user research themes systems map

There are synergies and similarities between our themes. We have developed a systems map below that demonstrates these. We have also mapped our design questions against our themes, to show the basis on which they were developed.

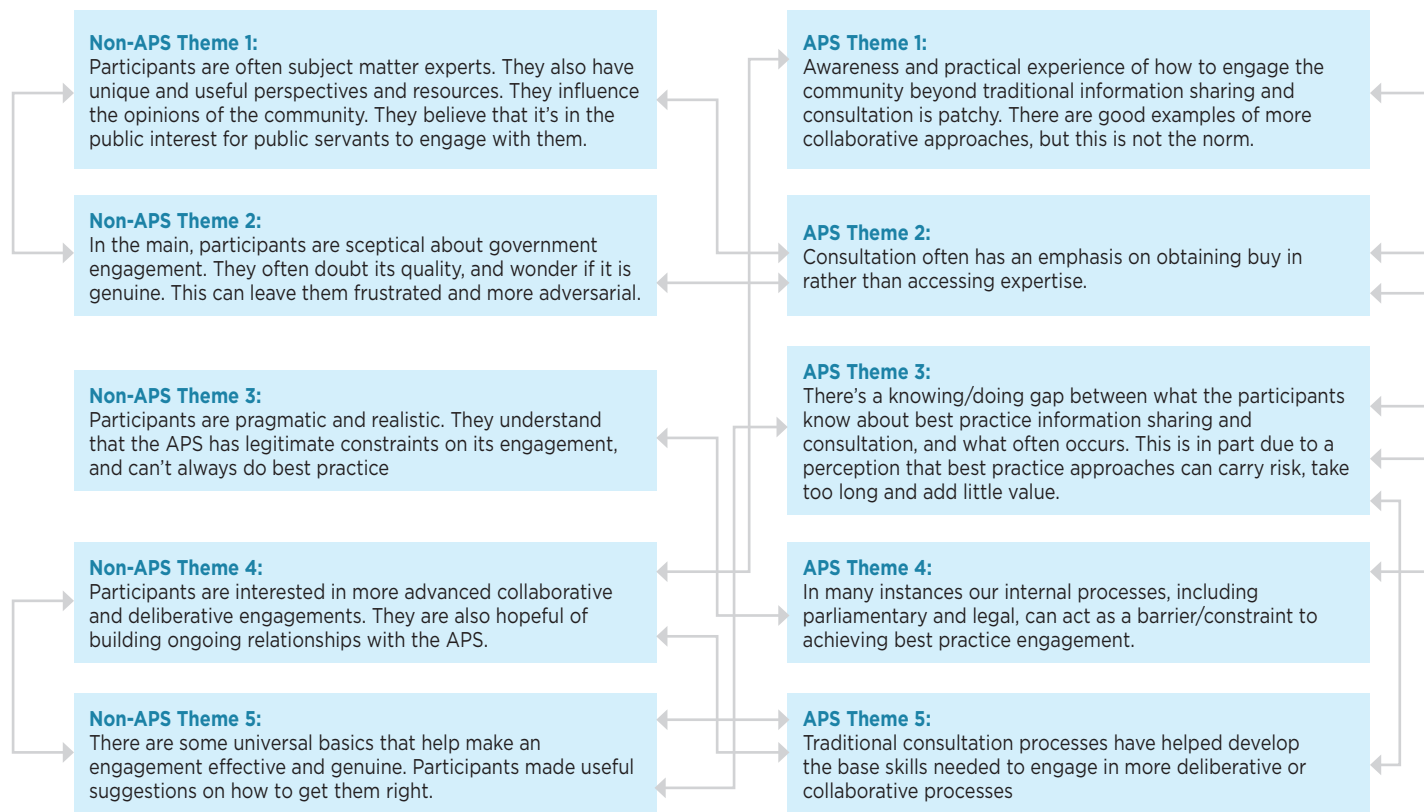
Systems map:

There are a lot of links between our 10 themes



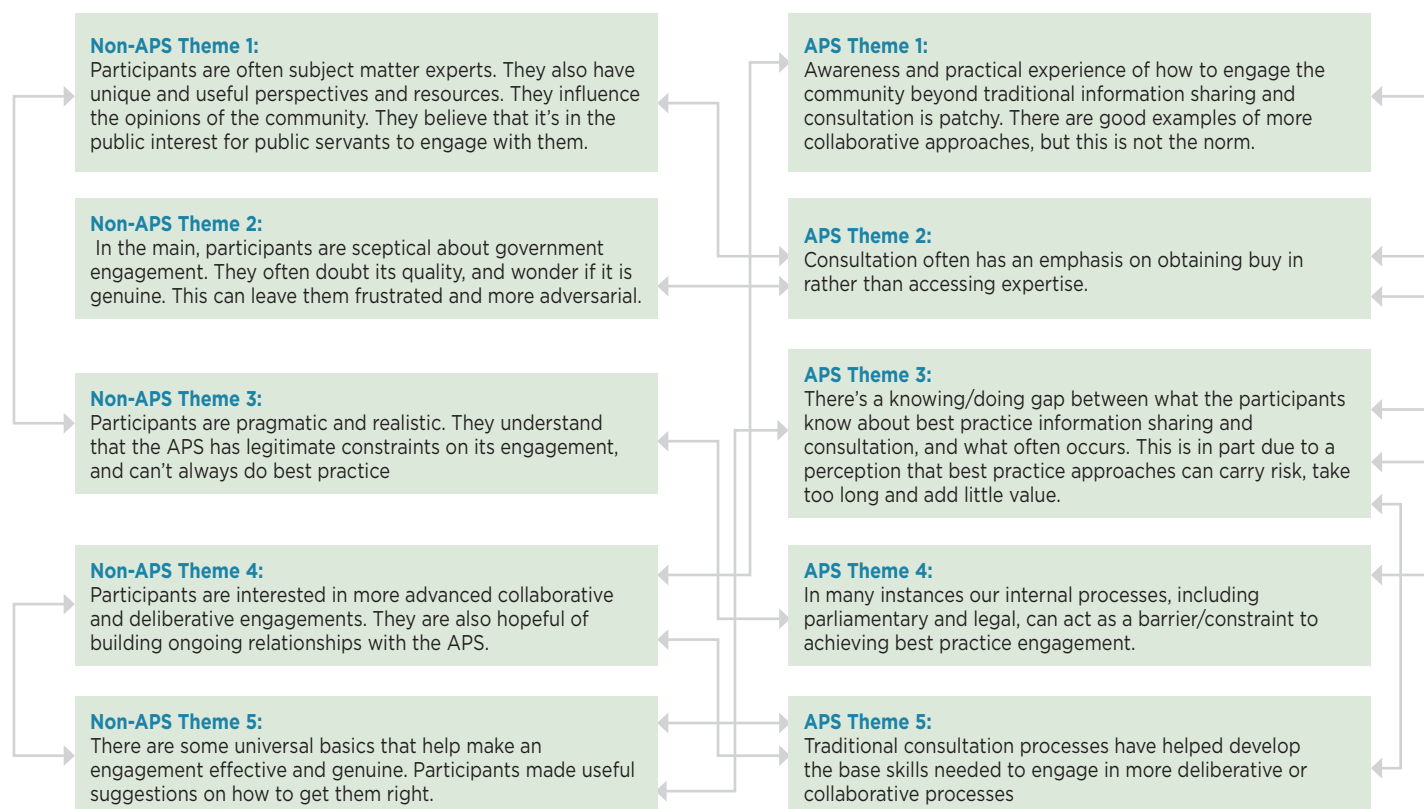
Design question 1 – Horses for Courses

How might we help public servants to select the right way to engage the public for the challenge before them?



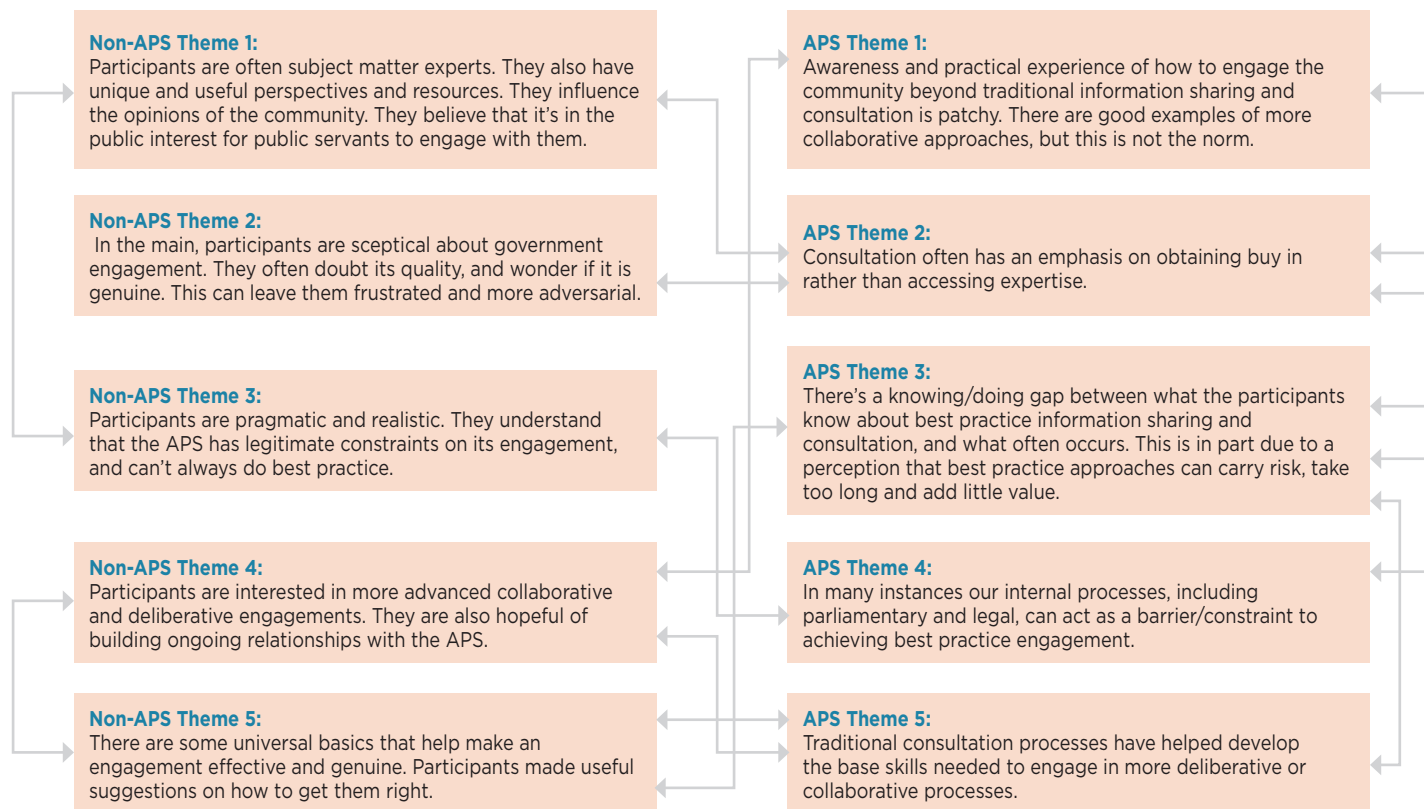
Design question 2 – Return on Investment

How can we assist Australian public servants to see the benefits from meaningful engagement with the community?



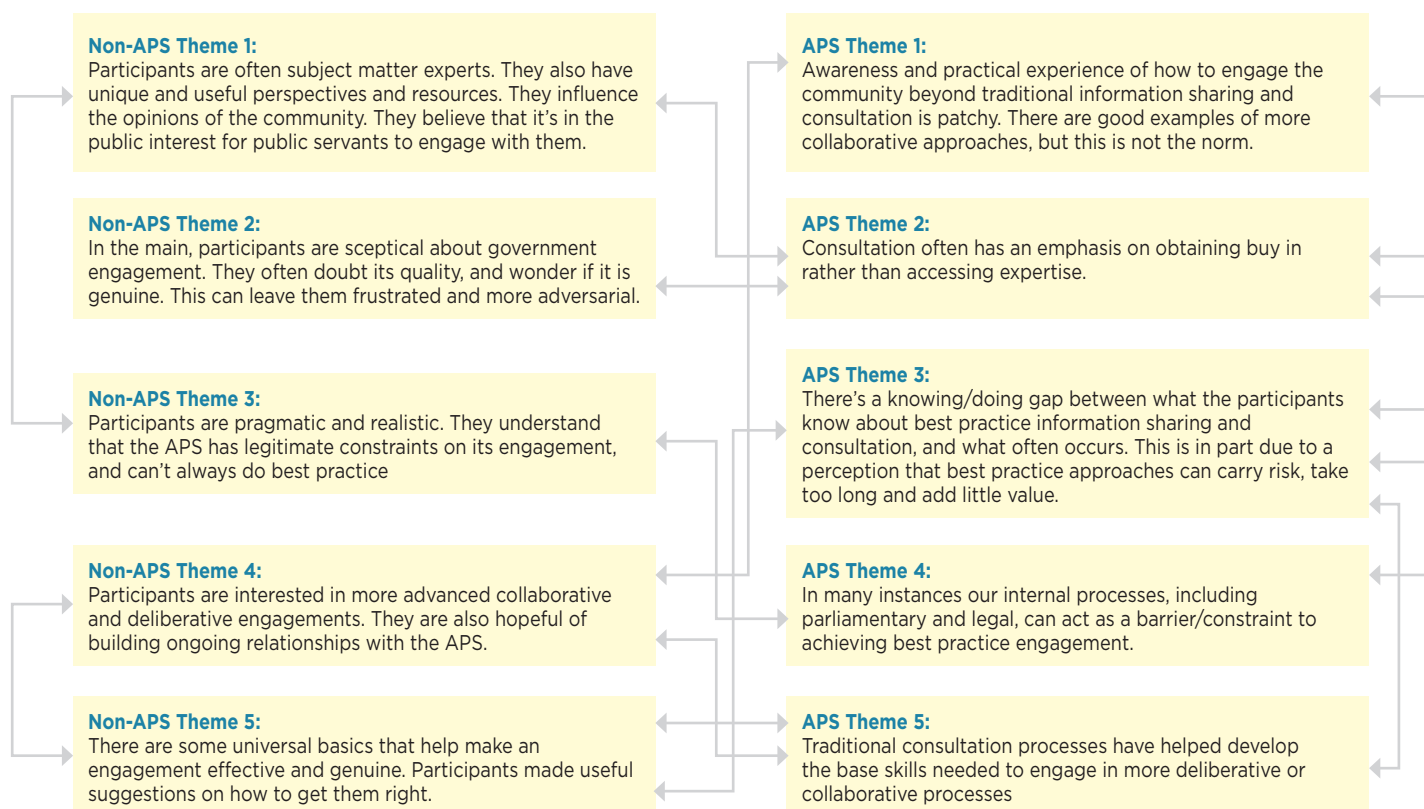
Design question 3 – Back to basics

How can we help the APS to get the basics of engagement right every time?



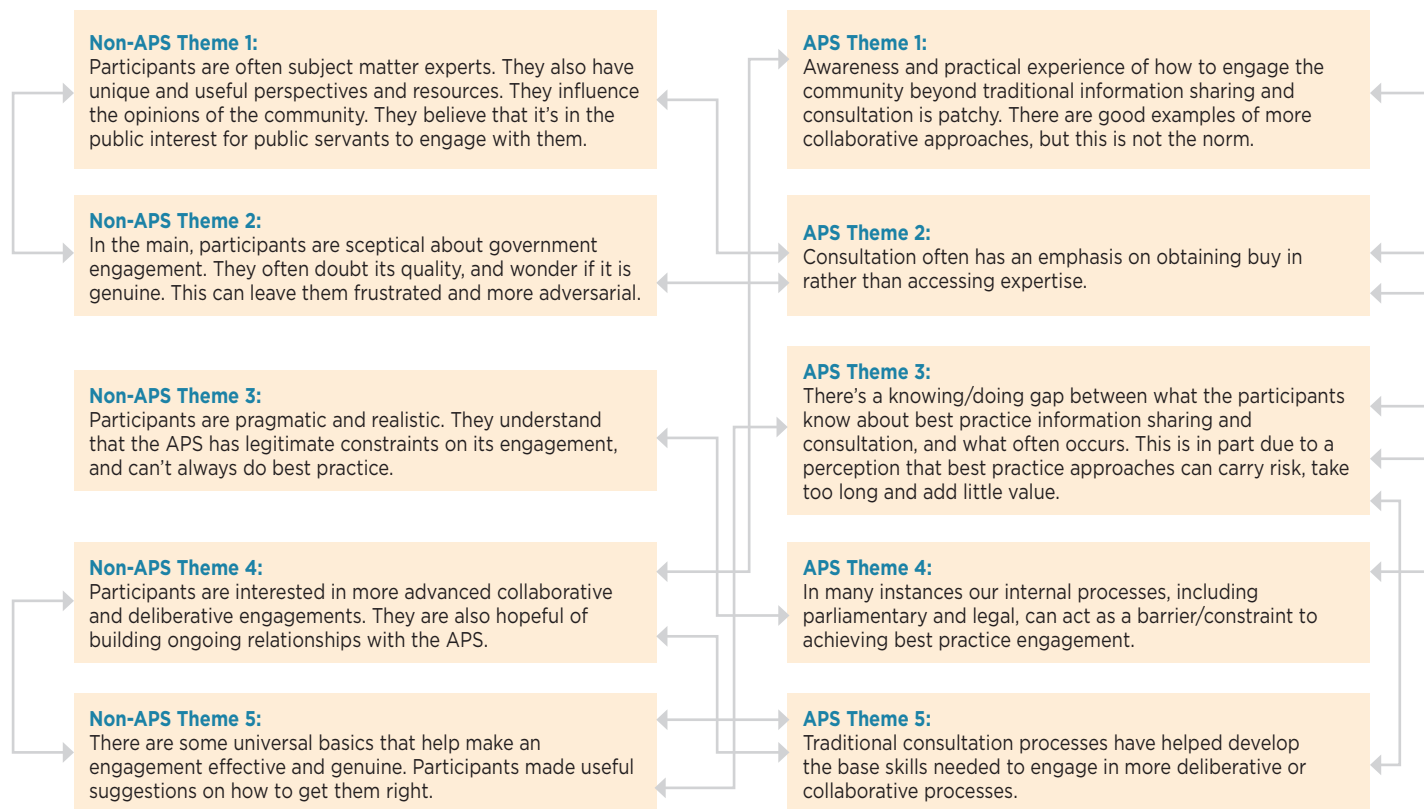
Design question 4 –Cutting the (real and perceived) beige tape

How can we assist Australian public servants to see the benefits from meaningful engagement with the How might we make it easier to navigate internal processes so that they do not become barriers to engagement?



Design question 5 – What’s in a name?

How might we re-imagine the public servant roles such as policy officer?

**Design question 6 – As the wheel turns?**

How might we re-think critical business processes to better reflect the importance of community expertise?

