Tool – Closing the loop

An important direction of the Charter is ensuring that people know how their feedback will be or has been used to influence a proposed planning instrument. This is called 'closing the loop'.

By 'closing the loop' on the engagement process, participants see that their contribution was valued and meaningful, and that the engagement process was open, transparent and accountable.

If your project involves a multi-stage engagement, you will need to 'close the loop' with stakeholders and the community at the end of each engagement activity and stage.

Once the final proposal for a planning instrument has been completed, you will again need to 'close the loop' on the engagement process by sharing the feedback received and describing how it has been used to inform the proposal.

Ideas to close the loop

The Charter does not require a set format to close the loop. The important thing is to communicate the diversity of feedback, and how the input has been, or will be, used to inform the proposal. This should be done in an accessible way for all participants.
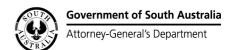
Avenues for closing the loop include:

Workshops and open days

- Set up a welcome poster that tells people how their input from the workshop/open day will be used (e.g. to inform the preparation of the draft plan). The poster can also communicate basic project information.

- Upon entry, welcome people and collect their email addresses (and any other demographic information you may like for reporting). This will enable you to send them a follow-up engagement summary report. You can then also contact them later to update them on progress or invite them to participate in another activity or a later stage of engagement.

- Make opening remarks about how their input will be used (e.g. to inform the preparation of the draft plan).

- 'Round back' after each workshop/open day activity to reiterate the kinds of comments being made.

- Make closing remarks or set up a closing poster to thank people for their input and reiterate how their input will be used. Inform them about how they can view the summary report of the engagement (will it be emailed out or published online?), and if there will be another opportunity to get involved, such as during the consultation phase of a draft plan.

Website

- Provide a project timeline showing when people can provide input and what that input will inform.

- Provide a summary of the engagement activities conducted and the themes of the feedback received. Include photos. Thank people for their input.

- Consider a downloadable, one-page infographic that summarises the engagement and outcomes.

- Upload engagement summary reports. Depending on your project, these could be summary reports of each activity/stage or for the whole engagement.

- Invite people to register their details to be kept informed of the project and future engagement opportunities.

Web platforms

- Share the outcomes of your engagement via social media and link your post/s to the project's web-page.

- Create a video and share this through online channels such as YouTube.

Engagement summary reports

- Prepare engagement summary reports that capture the activities undertaken and the feedback that was received. These can be prepared for each engagement activity, such as a workshop or open day, or for a whole stage of engagement (e.g. 'Stage one early engagement – open day, survey, stakeholder workshop).

- These reports can be published alongside a draft or final proposal and demonstrate how the draft or final proposal has been informed by community feedback (or not). The table below can be adpated for this purpose:

Theme of feedback	How the proposal has responded
Building heights - concern over height of proposed heights of buildings on Erhandi Street	The policy has been adjusted by…
Open space - desire for more open space in the area for informal and formal recreation	The draft plan includes provision for [x] hectares of green space in new developments

Media, advertising and print

- Publish a brochure or infographic that summarises the engagement and its outcomes.

- Work with media outlets to share the outcomes of the engagement. This can be achieved via a press release, direct liaison with journalists or paid advertorial/advertising.

- Share the outcomes of the engagement through your organisation's own communication channels, eg council newsletters.

Presentations or displays

- Present the outcomes of the engagement to stakeholder groups.

- Establish a pop-up display in a relevant location.