Falls Creek Resort Management Board: Stakeholder Engagement Framework

1: Framework Purpose

The stakeholder engagement framework is deemed to be the mechanism by which the Falls Creek Alpine Resort Management Board (FCARMB) complies with its obligations under the Alpine Resorts (Management) Act 1997 (AR(M) Act) as per Part 4, Sec38.

The functions of the Board, in particular Sec.38 (aa) & (ab) "to plan for the development, promotion, management and use, of each such alpine resort…" and "facilitate the development or promotion by others…" together with the requirements in Sec. 38 (ae) "to undertake research in alpine resort issues", mandates a broad level of engagement and co-operation.

The spectrum of this engagement and co-operation deals with a range of vested interests; people (visitors and resort guests), agencies, government departments, authorities, businesses, local government and numerous other organisations on a regular basis.

In terms of the objective of this engagement, it can take a variety of forms, depending on the scope or type of development, promotion or management being undertaken.

Therefore this framework is to be used as the key reference for FCARMB to ensure it is seen to be providing and obtaining the benefits of effective engagement across its diverse range of stakeholders. As such, the outcomes from this engagement will enable the Board to make appropriately informed decisions.

As such, this framework is to be used in the development of project stakeholder engagement plans that are tailored to the needs and requirements of each individual project.

The framework will similarly be used by the management of the Board to strengthen its relationship with the community, but also provides for the required investment into better decision making through ensuring decisions are informed of the community needs and aspirations.

The framework as such is the enabling document in building community capacity and provides for community views to be considered and acknowledged thereby delivering the best mechanism to achieve outcomes consistent with the function of the Board.

2: Aim of Framework

The development of the stakeholder engagement plan framework will assist the Board and management undertake these engagement activities with its extensive array of community interests and key stakeholders.

The diversity and breadth of interests will therefore be addressed consistently in the approach to engagement, along with providing guidance on "when and how" to undertake engagement activities and what steps and process should be considered.

As such the aims of the framework are:

- In respect to plans, strategies, policies and service delivery, stakeholder views are to be understood and considered.
- Through inclusive and equitable engagement practices stakeholders have the opportunity, but not the obligation, to participate.
- By establishing the opportunity for stakeholders to engage, the Board and management can increase stakeholder connectedness.
- Through active engagement, relationships can be enhanced, trust built and the stakeholders are informed and involved.
- Enhance the co-ordination, planning and promotion of the Boards stakeholder engagement activities.
- Strengthen the opportunity for feedback and communication by the Board and management to ensure the stakeholder groups know "when and how" their input has been considered to inform decisions made by the Board.

The framework aims to formalise a consistent approach to stakeholder engagement by the Board and management that is supplementary to those undertaken by statutory requirements, or where the Board is required to give notice, consult or engage stakeholders in a specific way.

In this context, the framework provides for compliance with the Victorian Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities Act 2006 that relates to community engagement, specifically: "every person in Victoria has the right, and is to have the opportunity, without discrimination, to participate in the conduct of public affairs, directly or through freely chosen representatives"(s18). The Act also includes provisions by which "every person has the right to freedom of expression which includes the freedom to seek, receive and impart information and ideas of all kinds, whether within or outside Victoria" (s.15).

3. Level of Engagement

Guiding principles in relation to the level of engagement have been taken from the International Association for Public Participation (IAP2), which has developed a Public Participation Spectrum.

The Spectrum shows that differing levels of participation are legitimate depending on the goals, time frames, resources and levels of concern in the decision to be made. However, and most importantly, the Spectrum sets out the promise being made to the public at each participation level.

IAP2 PUBLIC PARTICIPATION SPECTRUM

INCREASING LEVEL OF PUBLIC IMPACT

INFORM	CONSULT	INVOLVE	COLLABORATE	EMPOWER
Public Participation Goal:	**Public Participation Goal:**	**Public Participation Goal:**	**Public Participation Goal:**	**Public Participation Goal:**
To provide the public with balanced and objective information to assist them in understanding the problems, alternatives 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:	**Promise to the Public:**	**Promise to the Public:**	**Promise to the Public:**	**Promise to the Public:**
We will keep you informed.	We will keep you informed, listen to and acknowledge concerns 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 direct 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.
Example Tools:	**Example Tools:**	**Example Tools:**	**Example Tools:**	**Example Tools:**
• fact sheets • web sites • open houses.	• public comment • focus groups • surveys • public meetings.	• workshops • deliberate polling.	• citizen advisory committees • consensus-building • participatory decision-making.	• citizen juries • ballots • delegated decisions.

For more information regarding the IAP2 Public Participation Spectrum, refer to http://www.iap2.org.

The proposed FCARMB framework looks to utilise the following terminology:

Inform	One way communication providing balanced and objective information to assist understanding about something that is going to happen or has happened.
Consult	Two way communications designed to obtain public feedback about ideas on rationale, alternatives and proposals to inform decision making.
Involve	Participatory process designed to help identify issues and views to ensure that concerns and aspirations are understood and considered prior to decision making.
Collaborate	Working together to develop understanding of all issues and interests to work out alternatives and identify preferred solutions.

The only exemption to the application of the full IAP spectrum is the last column – "Empower" - where final decision making is in the hands of the public. The AR(M) Act via Part 4, Sec. 39 delegates to the Board the power to "do anything necessary or convenient to enable it to carry out its functions", as defined under Sec. 38.

As such, stakeholder engagement plans need to be tailored for each project, identifying the appropriate level of stakeholder engagement for that project.

It should be noted however, that while a project may have an overarching engagement level, a stakeholder analysis may result in some sections of the community having a greater or lesser level of participation depending on the level of impact the decision may have. During the life-time of the project, it may also be necessary to adjust the level of engagement, depending on the stage of the project.

4. Principles of Engagement

1. **Timely**
   - Engagement with the stakeholders is planned during the project planning stages to maximise the level of influence the community is able to have.
   - Community engagement occurs preferably during the scoping and identification of issues.
2. **Inclusive and Accessible**
   - All stakeholders have a right to participate in the development of decisions that may impact on their lives.
   - Several methods of community engagement may be required to ensure engagement activities are responsive to community needs.
   - The method of engagement will be clear and authentic.
3. **Responsive**
   - The Board will actively engage with, and listen, to the diverse range of needs and expectations of its stakeholders and community.
   - The Board commits to considering community feedback in an open and transparent manner.
4. **Transparent and Reciprocal**
   - Information about the project will be easily and freely available to enable participants to be fully informed when providing input into stakeholder engagement activities.
   - Feedback is provided to participants at all key stages of the project. Stakeholder engagement activities are documented and minutes/notes provided to those who participated within 20 business days.
   - Updates and final outcomes for engagement projects to be available on the FCRMB website under the "community notices" section or dedicated landing page on the corporate tab of www.fallscreek.com.au.

5. How and When to Engage

Using the Spectrum model to review the goals for each level of engagement, the project team, decision makers and key external stakeholder expectations should be evaluated to assist in determining what level of engagement is expected by each participant.

When commencing a project, consideration will need to be given to determine the level of impact any decision may have on the broader community and stakeholders.

To assist in this determination, the following guide provides a framework to evaluate "Impact". As a general rule, the higher the level of impact, the greater level of stakeholder engagement needed.

Impact Evaluation Matrix

Level 3	Criteria (one or more)	Current examples
There is a high level of impact or risk (perceived or real) on Falls Creek as a whole, or a section of the stakeholders or a community group. **There is potential for any decision to create controversy and/or have varying levels of acceptance within the community.**	• Significant impact on attributes that are considered to be of high value to the community (e.g. lifestyle or physical environment) • Likely to have a high level of interest across Falls Creek or local areas. • Potential for a high level of controversy or conflict across Falls Creek or local areas. • High levels of complexity in the issue being considered • Likely to impact on vulnerable sections of the community • There is a loss or significant change to any service or facility provided by FCRMB.	• Master Plan 2016 • The Nordic Bowl facility plans • Closure of FCRMB service or facility • Arts & Culture Strategy and Strategic Stakeholder Groups • Focus Group on Renewables • Design & Site Guideline review
Level 2	Criteria (one or more)	Current examples
There is a medium level of impact or risk (perceived or real) on Falls Creek as a whole or a section of the community. **It is likely that the decision will be accepted by the majority of the community impacted, however the decision may be an inconvenience for some sections of the community.**	• There may be some impact on attributes that are considered to be of high value to the community or a section of the community (e.g. lifestyle or physical environment). • Some sections of the community concerned are likely to have a high level of interest. • Potential for some controversy or conflict across Falls Creek or local areas. • There is a medium to low level of complexity in the issue being considered • There is some loss or change to any service or facility provided by FCRMB.	• Redevelopment of the community gym • Minor changes to eligibility criteria to access a service, i.e tree lopping/removal • Redevelopment of the local playground • Redevelopment of sporting facilities • Minor review of Social Justice Charter
Level 1	Criteria (one of more)	Current Examples
There is a low level of impact or risk (perceived or real) on Falls Creek as a whole or a section of the community. **It is likely that the decision will be widely accepted by the community and seen as having positive outcomes or being required.**	• No negative impact on attributes that are considered to be of high value to the community (i.e. lifestyle or environment) • Low level of interest across the stakeholder group. • Low to no risk of controversy or conflict. • There is only a small change, or enhancement to any service or facility provided by FCRMB.	• Upgrade of Village Bowl playground • Extension of operating hours for a service, ie. VIC or shuttles • Local street or streetscaping upgrades • Introduction or changes to a local activity program (e.g. a learning program)

Note: In the instance, where a situation arises requiring FCRMB to respond rapidly to avoid any immediate threat to the health, safety or wellbeing of the community, it may not be feasible to involve stakeholders prior to any action taken.

Once this determination has been made regards the overall level of engagement needed, the following diagram provide guidance as to the level of impact identified, based off *the IAP2 Spectrum of Public Participation.*
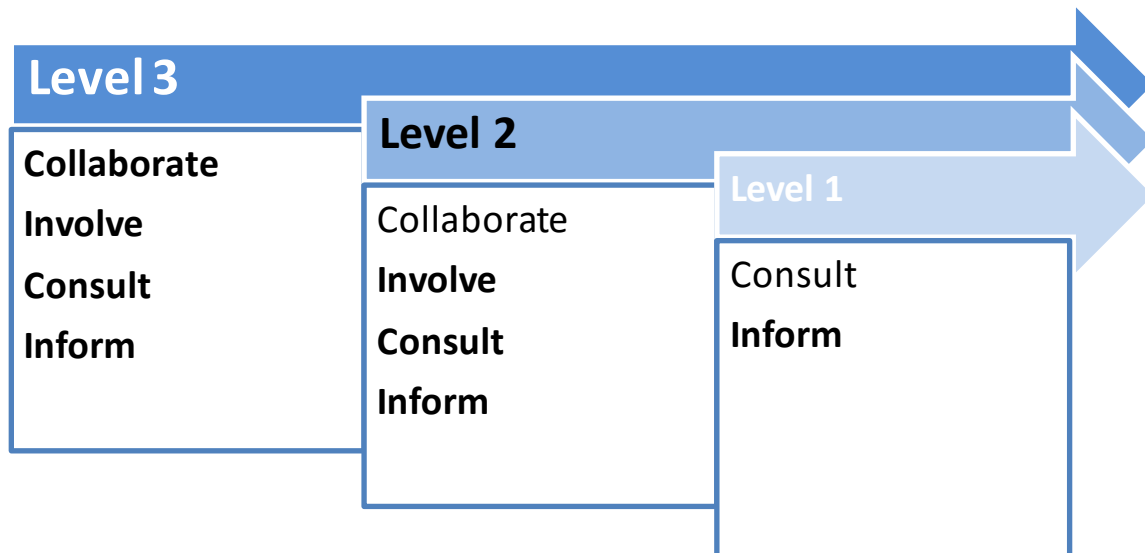
At a **Level 3 impact**, the targeted level of public participation should be aimed at the Collaborate level.

Level 2 impact should normally aim at having public participation aimed at the Involve level, although in some circumstances Collaborate may be appropriate.

Level 1 impact will normally be located at the Informed level of public participation, although some minor consultation activities may occur before making a final decision.

With all levels of impact, a stakeholder analysis is critical in determining what level of engagement may be required. Even at Level 3, not all stakeholders will need to have the same level of engagement; many stakeholders only being required to be engaged at the Informed, Consult or Involve level.

6. Who to Engage

A stakeholder mapping and analysis exercise will identify stakeholder expectations and facilitate categorising each stakeholder, according to the respective levels of interest, impact and influence or power. This process will also identify the range of complexities that may exist around the engagement process.

A comprehensive list of stakeholders is to be drawn from the Executive Leadership Team's understanding of the impacting parties on a "project specific basis".

This will include, but not be limited to:

- Minster for Environment, Climate Change and Water (incl. Advisors and Ministerial staff)
- Minister for Tourism and Major Events; Minister for Sport; Minister for Veterans (incl. Advisors and Ministerial staff)
- Other Ministers
- Alpine Resort Management Boards (ARMB's)
- Federal Department of Environment
- Federal Regional Development Australia (RDA)
- Victorian Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning (DELWP)
- Victorian Department of Economic Development, Jobs, Transport and Resources (DEDJTR)
- Victorian Department of Treasury and Finance (DTF)
- Sport and Recreation Victoria (SRV)
- Victorian Regional Development Victoria (RDV)
- Victorian Emergency Management Victoria (EMV)
- Country Fire Authority (CFA)
- Tourism Australia
- Visit Victoria
- Bicycle Victoria
- Regional Tourism Boards (RTB's)
- Parks Victoria
- Victorian National Parks Association (VPNA)
- Water Authorities
- Catchment Management Authorities (CMA's)
- Essential Service Providers
- Ski Lift Companies
- Club Lodge Groups
- Chambers of Commerce
- Rate payers Associations or Alpine Associations
- Traditional Owner's Groups
- Local Government Authorities
- Vicroads
- Alpine Resorts Industry Advisory Group (ARIAG)
- Snowsports Industry Australia (SIA)
- Australian Ski Areas Association (ASAA)
- Ski and Snowboard Australia (SSA)
- Victorian Snowsports Association (VSA)
- Olympic Winter Institute (OWi)
- Arts, Cultural and Recreation Groups

7. Implementation Process

Purpose	1) Identify the relevance of engagement 2) Establish outcomes to be achieved by engagement 3) Evaluate historical context 4) Has there been any existing engagement on the issue 5) Assess context and move to engagement implementation
Who to Engage	1) Draft stakeholder matrix and relevant parties 2) Review stakeholders and establish required engagement level based on matrix
How to Engage	1) Select the engagement method and tools needed 2) Plan the engagement; timelines, budget, resourcing and logistics 3) Determine key messages and method of communication 4) Evaluate stakeholder engagement risks and mitigation
Report	1) Prepare and capture stakeholder contact details 2) Plan feedback loops and reporting timelines for engagement group 3) Define how final outcomes will be documented and circulated 4) Ensure project outcomes are accessible via FCRMB mediums
Evaluate	1) For all Level 3 and Level 2 impact projects, a summary evaluation must be prepared 2) Rating Group evaluated based on: - Quality of information received - Effectiveness of facilitated sessions in gather information - Were resources adequately provided alone with all information - Openness and transparency of all matters in relevant sessions - Were there sufficient views, opinions and needs heard - Was the decision making process fair and appropriate

References:

1) *Hume City Council Region Community Engagement Framework & Planning Guide*
2) *Government of South Australia – Community Engagement Framework "A model framework for leading practice in local government in South Australia"*
3) *Albury City Council – Community Engagement Policy*
4) *ARCC: Stakeholder Engagement Framework*
5) *International Association for Public Participation – various resources*
6) *Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning – "Community and stakeholder engagement in the alpine sector" workshop outcomes*

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