

Development of a Level of Services Agreement for the Operation and Minor Maintenance of the Raymond Island Ferry

Engagement Plan

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Prepared for



by

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1 Introduction

1.1 Background

This Engagement Plan sets out how stakeholders will be actively engaged in the Development of a Level of Services Agreement for the Operation and Minor Maintenance of the Raymond Island Ferry.

Stakeholder engagement is a key aspect of any decision regarding public infrastructure and services. It helps build understanding and support for any decision and enables stakeholders to be informed and consulted about any decision.

The Plan has been developed to incorporate public participation concepts developed by the International Association for Public Participation (IAP2).

1.2 About the Plan

This Community and Stakeholder Consultation Plan has five parts:

1. Setting the aims and context for engagement
2. Identifying stakeholder groups, interests and levels of engagement
3. Outlining the engagement methods and activities designed to maximise involvement
4. Describing implementation and monitoring processes.

1.3 Context

Council through its commitment to provide quality service, seeks to articulate more precisely the level of service Council will provide for transport connectivity between Paynesville and Raymond Island, including the provision of services during ferry outages.

The drivers for this action are the identified needs to:

- Provide clarity of service provision for ferry patrons, emergency services agencies, utilities providers and other service providers;
- Develop a Council policy for transport connectivity and related services between Paynesville and Raymond Island; and
- Provide clarity of service delivery requirements to the Ferry Contractor in order to address ambiguity or lack of definition in the current contract.

The current Raymond Island Ferry Operating and Minor Maintenance Contract was developed by Council based on previous Ferry operating contracts, through an evolutionary process, informed, in no particular order of relative magnitude, by historic agency agreements and funding arrangements, previous Council entities, community influence, custom and practice, and service level expansion.

The current Raymond Island Ferry Service Operation and Minor Maintenance Contract commenced in August 2017.

Clarity around the level of service to be provided during both the operation of the ferry and during outages would assist with the management and execution of this contract.

1.4 Project Outputs

This consultancy project will provide Council with five outputs that will serve as recommendations for Council consideration as the basis for a “Raymond Island Ferry - Level of Service Agreement” between Council, the Contractor, Emergency services agencies and the community:

Output 1: Principles for the operation of the Raymond Island ferry service.

Output 2. Definition of services to be provided during Ferry outages

Output 3. Timetable

Output 4. Comparative analysis of services provided by operators of similar public transport connections

Output 5. Fee Structure

Each of these outputs has a direct public interest element and therefore requires input from the community and other stakeholders.

The aim of the engagement process is to ensure that the preparation of these outputs is as thoroughly informed by the community as possible and that the best available information about community needs, aspirations and tolerances is used in arriving at recommendations and decisions on the service.

2 Aims and Objectives

2.1 Aim

The aims of Stakeholder Engagement for the project are to:

- Ensure that the community is involved and included in each stage of the project;
- Ensure that the community’s and stakeholder’s views about levels of service are well understood and incorporated in the project;
- Better inform decisions on levels of service by responding to community needs and views.

2.2 Objectives

The objectives of the plan describe how the consultants will:

- Identify the community and stakeholders affected by, or interested in, the levels of service for the Raymond Island Ferry.
- Understand how the community and stakeholders are affected and what their needs are for the ferry service.
- Communicate effectively with the community and stakeholders about the project.
- Document and respond to any stakeholder feedback on the issues, alternatives and recommendations and provide a report on the outcomes of the engagement process.

3 Stakeholder Identification and Issues

3.1 Stakeholder Identification

Council will establish a Stakeholder Reference Group (SRG) with membership appointed by Council.

The SRG will include but not be limited to representatives of:

- Raymond Island Community Association
- Paynesville Business and Tourism Association
- Raymond Island business operators
- Paynesville business operators
- DELWP
- CFA
- Ambulance Victoria
- Gippsland Ports
- Raymond Island Koala and Wildlife Shelter
- Others as determined by Council

The SRG will not only provide a source of knowledge and sounding board for the project, but also a direct link and communication channel to other community stakeholders. This will ensure that all community interests are understood and that community members have an effective voice.

The individuals and groups listed include parties who represent a direct or indirect interest as an individual or a broader community interest.

A key to engaging with community is to understand and respond to the engagement needs of different groups and how best to engage according to the values, perceptions and needs of those groups.

The engagement methods have been designed to meet those needs.

Table 1: IAP2 Spectrum

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

Table 2 lists the relevant stakeholder groups and suggests the level of engagement undertaken in accordance with the IAP2 Spectrum.

Table 2: Stakeholders

Stakeholder group	Members	Level of Engagement (IAP2)
SRG	Various business and community members	Collaborate
Residents	Permanent or itinerant residents	Involve
Property owners	Including property owners who may not be residents	Involve
Raymond Island business owners	Island residents who run businesses either on the Island or mainland	Involve
Paynesville business owners	Owners who have an indirect interest in ferry services	Consult
Families	Especially with school and other child-related activities	Involve
Seniors and disabled	Residents with specific needs for level of service	Consult
Emergency Services	CFA, Police, Ambulance, SES	Involve through SRG
Commercial Services	Trades and other services visiting the Island	Consult
Visitors	Regular or touring visitors	Consult
Raymond Island Community Association	RICA Committee and Membership	Involve through SRG
Ferry Contractor	The current Ferry Operator	Consult through EGSC
Council	East Gippsland Shire Council as the provider of the service	Empower through sound information and advice

3.2 Summary of Key Issues

Key issues have been grouped into areas of focus to enable an understanding of impact on each stakeholder group and inform the communication methods and materials for addressing these issues.

Table 3: Key Issues

Issue	Description
Current Contract	Lack of clarity of service provision for and policy for ferry patrons, emergency services agencies and others.
Cost	Costs associated with the current level of service and related factors are increasing. Fees are the only means of cost recovery and need to reflect sound principles.
Fees	Fee structures need to be soundly based, fair and easy to administer. The issue of fees will always attract community discussion.
Outages	Planned or unplanned outages create additional costs and inconvenience with alternative access arrangements required to be put in place.
Alternative access	Use of the water taxi, barge and bus service during outages has an effect on access, safety and convenience.
Operating schedule	The need for an operating schedule that optimises cost and convenience for ferry users.
Safety	Access to the Island is an important community safety issue.
Future replacement	The future of the ferry service, although not within the scope of the project, will attract discussion and comment.
Transparency	The community expects access to reliable information in appropriate forms to generate a good understanding of issues and to assist in decision-making.

4 Engagement Methods and Activities

4.1 Engagement Methods

Consultation will include the activities as detailed below in **Table 4.1**.

It should be noted that the levels of the engagement go from inform, consult, involve to collaborate with community stakeholders, requiring a clear, targeted and consistent engagement approach. The methods have been selected accordingly.

Table 4 Communication Methods

Activity	Description
Project Meetings	Formal discussions regarding the project, community engagement processes, outcomes and project deliverables. Primarily for the Stakeholder Reference Group.
Briefings	Information briefings to update stakeholders on the project and seek feedback. These may be via direct meetings or written status reports for circulation.
Focus Groups	Structured small-group discussion that enables full exploration of issues and views by community members.
Face-to-face	One-on-one discussion with key stakeholders to explore specific issues and responses.
Survey	On-line and hard copy survey for Raymond island residents to provide comment on levels of service and related issues.
Direct mail/ e-mail	At key stages of the engagement process a direct mail-out to Raymond Island residents and property owners will be warranted.
Information Sheet	A brief, clear Information Sheet outlining the purpose and context of the project will help to inform the community of its scope, methodology and the involvement.

Note: The nature of the project does not warrant the use of broad-brush methods of engagement/communication including on-line engagement, local media or wider community involvement. The primary aim of engagement for this project is to obtain detailed and high-quality input and involvement by those most affected by the service. Council can adequately consider the needs of the broader community in its decisions.

4.2 Engagement Activities by Stakeholder Group

The following table provides an outline of the activities that will be undertaken to communicate with the identified stakeholder groups according to the predicted needs of each group.

Table 5: Engagement activities by stakeholder group

	Project Meetings	Briefings	Focus Groups	Face-to-face	Survey	Direct Mail	Information Sheet
Stakeholder Reference Group	●	●					
Residents		●	●		●	●	●
Property owners		●	●		●	●	●
Raymond Island business owners		●	●	●	●	●	●
Paynesville business owners		●	●	●			●
Families		●	●		●	●	●
Seniors and disabled		●	●		●	●	●
Emergency Services		●		●			●
Commercial Services							
Visitors					●		●
Raymond Island Community Association		●	●				●
Ferry Contractor				●			
Council		●					

4.3 Engagement schedule

The consultation schedule has been designed to assign the activities to each stage of the project and ensure that engagement occurs in a comprehensive and timely manner and to ensure that community and stakeholder groups identified in the stakeholder analysis are appropriately informed and to seek their opinions.

Table 6: Consultation Schedule

Month	July				August					September				October				November				December			
Week	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25
Tasks																									
Inception																									
Commencement																									
SRG Meetings																									
Draft Output 1																									
Engagement																									
Investigations																									
Information Sheet																									
Focus Groups																									
Survey																									
Outputs 1 & 2																									
Draft Outputs 3, 4 & 5																									
Final Draft Report																									
Council Briefing																									
Final Report																									
Project Close																									

4.4 Communication

All stakeholder communication will be kept concise, easy to understand and aim for clear and consistent messages.

Throughout the consultation process communication will aim to:

- Clarify and manage expectations about the purpose of the engagement.
- Provide clear information about the engagement process, issues, analysis and options for decision.

The key messages contained in the engagement include:

- The project scope is to review and make recommendations on levels of service for the Raymond Island Ferry, including: Principles for the operation of the service, definition of services to be provided during Ferry outages, timetable, comparative analysis of services provided by operators of similar public transport connections and fee structure.
- The project does not involve a review of access options for Raymond Island.
- The community is being asked to contribute in a targeted and comprehensive way.
- Community interests are well represented on the Stakeholder Reference Group.
- All community views are valid and will be considered in the project.
- The community will be informed of the issues raised and the outcomes of the project.

Communication will occur all methods outlined above in this plan.

5 Implementation and Monitoring

5.1 Implementation

The plan will be implemented upon consideration by the Stakeholder Reference Group and approval of the client. All engagement and communications material will be prepared by the consultants to the satisfaction of the client.

5.2 Documenting engagement outcomes

The information obtained from the consultation process will be documented:

- Locations, dates and names of participants at meetings or briefings.
- Summary of all feedback received.
- Responses to feedback received and the method of communication back to the stakeholders.

A Stakeholder Engagement report will accompany the project Final Report.