

LEARNING LAB

# IMPLEMENTING DELIBERATIVE ENGAGEMENT

INFORMATION SESSION FOR CEO  
AND COUNCIL LEADERS

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# PRINCIPLES OF DELIBERATION

Activities such as citizens juries are designed around a core set of principles.

These are outlined below:





### CLEAR REMIT

**Deliberation is** about the deliberating group responding to a remit – or primary question – that goes to the core of the issue, shares the dilemma, and promotes open discussion. The remit question is super clear.

**Deliberation isn't** about responding to easy issues. It allows council to receive solutions to complex problems.



### INFORMATIVE

**Deliberation** requires that people have detailed, in-depth, and balanced information before they come to judgement. This includes hearing different perspectives, including the views of experts and interest groups.

**Deliberation isn't** about asking people for uninformed views. It allows you as council decision makers to know that the recommendations being provided to you are based on evidence and have consider all sides of the issue.



### REPRESENTATIVE

**Deliberation requires** that the deliberating group is representative of the whole community. The group is usually selected using an independently conducted, random, stratified process.

**Deliberation isn't** about allowing anyone to turn up and people to 'self-select', like the participants at a public meeting. It allows you as council decision makers to have a high level of comfort, because you know what everyday people who are broadly representative of your community think is reasonable (once they are informed). This is more valuable than knowing only what interest groups and highly articulate and invested people are lobbying for.



### DELIBERATIVE

**Deliberation goes** beyond conversation and dialogue. It requires those deliberating to weigh up options and come to judgement on a problem.

**Deliberation isn't** about people giving you a wish list or a list of ideas. It results in clear direction for council decision makers.



### INFLUENTIAL

**Deliberation requires** decision makers to give weight to and implement the outcomes to the greatest extent possible. This forms a foundation for building trust with your community.

**Deliberation isn't** about asking people their opinion and then disregarding their views, which significantly reduces.



## BLANK PAGE REPORT

**Deliberation requires** that participants respond to the remit by writing their own report. Starting with a blank page, they refine and agree on their final recommendations, then present their report directly to decision makers for consideration.

**Deliberation isn't** about providing options or a draft report. Nor does the organisation gather feedback to their own report. It allows the council to hear directly from their community without any interpretation from consultants or council officers.



## TIME

**Deliberation requires** that the deliberating group is given sufficient time to become informed about the issues, weigh up options and come to judgement. Long form processes are usually 4-6 full days. An online (equivalent) process or a short process can be held over 2-3 days, if you are scaling down. See the scaling deliberation section below.

**Deliberation isn't** about holding a short workshop or evening meeting.



## TRANSPARENT

**Deliberation is** a public process that is seeking to build trust in democratic decision making and as such all aspects should be made public, unless there are extenuating circumstances. Members of the public should be able to observe the deliberating group in action and the report of the group should be made public immediately after it is handed to the key decision maker. All information considered by the group should be considered public and be on the project website. Videoing the proceedings and/or participant vox pops are other ways to increase the transparency of the deliberation.

**Deliberation isn't** about working behind closed doors. It allows the public to see that it has been a fair process.



## INDEPENDENT FACILITATION

**Deliberation is** designed and facilitated by an independent professional facilitator with experience in deliberation. Facilitation enables individuals to work through a designed set of activities (conversations) to collectively and productively produce an outcome (recommendations). Facilitators ensure that all group members are given equal opportunity to participate.

**Deliberation isn't** about the group being led to a predetermined result.



## INCLUSIVE

**Deliberation requires** that barriers to participation are removed so that anyone feels they could participate in a deliberation. Some barriers are easily managed, for example, paying people an honorarium to cover the costs of their participation (travel, childcare etc). Also, support can be provided to people living with poor sight or hearing and meetings can be held in accessible venues. Other barriers, such as people not having the time or considering that 'this is not for them' are harder to remove.

**Deliberation isn't** about excluding people and it ensures that council hears from a true cross section of its community.

# DIFFERENCES BETWEEN COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT AND DELIBERATION

	<b>Standard Engagement</b>	<b>Deliberative engagement</b>
 <p><b>LEVEL OF INFLUENCE</b> - SPECTRUM</p>	Consult or Involve	Collaborate – if a group of people are giving you significant commitment the return commitment you give is that their report or recommendations must be presented directly to the decision makers (not by consultants, facilitators or staff) – to demonstrate the gravitas of the report and the importance of the participants’ role. It also helps to build trust between the governing body and the community
 <p><b>TIME</b></p>	Short time commitment - interviews, 2-3 hour workshops, occasionally a whole day, bimonthly committees	Long time commitment – people have to be given the time to consider information, weigh up options and come to agreement
 <p><b>CLEAR REMIT</b></p>	Often not such a complex question	A clear challenge or question is placed before the deliberating group.
 <p><b>DELIBERATION</b></p>	Provide views and opinions – end up with a wide range of views and no sense of agreement or acceptability across the group	Participants in small and the whole group weigh up issues and options and then come to agreement – end up with a set of recommendations – with 80% agreement
 <p><b>INFORMATION</b></p>	The short amount of time means that the participants can only be provided with a small amount of information	The group is given the opportunity to request the information they need to consider the issues/task. High levels of information are provided
 <p><b>REPRESENTATIVE</b></p>	While we often say that we are seeking the views of a wide range of people the use of standard participant recruitment techniques (anyone can come, or EOs) we mostly get the same people or the people who are most adversely affected. The supporters do not come.	Most deliberative panels and juries, the people are selected using a random, stratified selection process. The stratification ensures you match the demographics of your area(or stakeholder group) and the random means you find people who have not previously been engaged with the organisation and hold a wide range of views held by everyday citizens
 <p><b>BLANK PAGE</b></p>	Often starts with a draft recommendation or report and views are sought on that report. Some organisations are reluctant to engage until they have a draft report and they are seeking comments – so a large part of the process has already been directed by council staff	Start with a blank page All deliberative processes enable the participants to prepare their own thinking and report from scratch. We do not provide a draft position for review or ask for comments on a pre- prepared document. The jury starts with a blank page.

# DELIBERATIVE ENGAGEMENT REMITS

A remit is a clear statement that outlines the question or task before the community / stakeholders/audience that reflects the scope of their contribution and provides a platform for open discussion about the trade-offs involved with the issue.

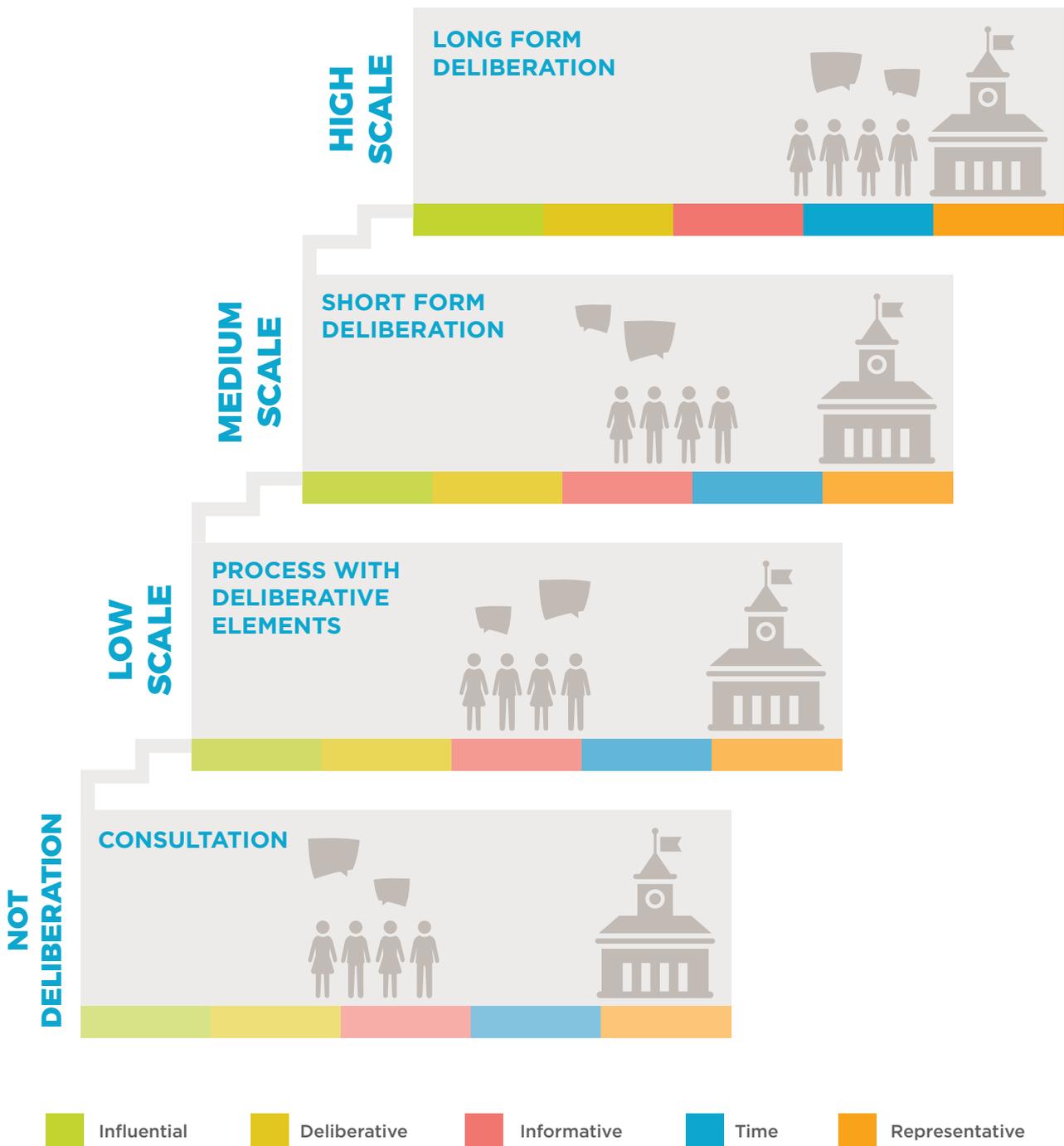
Some principles for developing a remit:

- It needs to go to the core of the issue at hand
- Needs to provide a strong, open platform for a discussion about the trade offs involved in the decision
- It needs to easily make sense to someone who isn't overly familiar with the issue or topic (pass the barista test)

Community Vision (10+ years)	10 Year Financial Plan (hypothetical)	Council Plan
<p>The world is changing, and life in Bayside will be very different in 30 years' time. What's our vision for Bayside in 2050 and what do we need to prioritise in order to get there? <b><i>(Bayside Community Vision 2050)</i></b></p>	<p>There is going to be a lot of pressure on the Council budget over the next four years because of the pandemic (decreased revenue and demand for more services). How should Council prioritise expenditure and services to help community recover from the pandemic over the next four years?</p>	<p>Council Plans set direction for Council. The dilemma is we can't do everything. We want to ensure our next Council Plan reflects what is important to the future of our community. What should Council focus on for the next four years? <b><i>(Greater Shepparton Council Plan)</i></b></p>
<p>What is our vision for the future of Glen Eira and how can we reflect the aspirations of our diverse and growing community? <b><i>(Glen Eira Community Vision 2040)</i></b></p>	<p>How should Council prioritise investment in services and infrastructure that is fair and equitable for our community?</p>	
	<p>What gaps are there in Council's services and programs and what trade-offs are you willing to make in existing services or programs to address those gaps?</p>	

# SCALING DELIBERATION

The level of **involvement and trust** between community and decision makers, is shaped by the level of deliberative principles embedded in the process.



# HIGH SCALE

## LONG FORM DELIBERATION

If all principles are enacted at a high scale, the process would be considered a **long-form deliberation** and would be **collaborate** on the IAP2 spectrum.



### INFLUENTIAL

The Mayor, Councillors, and CEO publicly commit to the level of influence the group will have and what they will do with the recommendations (the promise).

The deliberative group presents their recommendations directly to the Mayor and CEO.

Following the deliberation, the Council responds, clearly outlining what recommendations the organisation will implement and what they won't, and why.



### DELIBERATIVE

The participants identify their own ideas, consider all information available, weigh up the options and trade-offs, and come to judgement on the best way forward. They prepare their own recommendations in response to the remit or challenge.

During the process, the Council prepares a 'response' to the group's draft recommendations, seeking clarity where needed. The group considers this response before finalising their recommendations.

The group's level of agreement on each recommendation are sought to determine which have super majority (80%) support.



### INFORMATIVE

Extensive information is provided to and considered by the group. This includes a background document, responses to fact checks, questions answered throughout process, organisational speakers, curated external speakers with diverse and opposing views and speakers nominated by the deliberative group.



### TIME

More time (4-6 days) provided face-to-face or between sessions to weigh up options, consider trade-offs, and find common ground before coming to agreement on recommendations.



### REPRESENTATIVE

Fully randomised and stratified sample of the impacted community.

Selected through an independent recruitment process.

Stratified to match key demographics or other targets which are chosen to ensure the group represents the community affected by a decision.

# MEDIUM SCALE

## SHORT FORM DELIBERATION

If all principles are enacted at a medium scale (or the process includes only one or two high level approaches) it would be considered a **short-form deliberation** and be **involve/collaborate** on the IAP2 spectrum.



### INFLUENTIAL

The Mayor, Councillors, and CEO publicly commit to the level of influence the group will have and what they will do with the recommendations (the promise).

Senior decision maker/s receive the group's recommendations.

Following the deliberation, the Council responds, clearly outlining what recommendations the organisation will implement and what they won't, and why.



### DELIBERATIVE

Participants prepare their own ideas/options and levels of agreement are identified. Some level of consensus is sought, however, the group has reduced ability to negotiate together.

The process may (or may not) include some level of organisational response to the group's draft recommendations during the process.



### INFORMATIVE

A background document is prepared and the organisation responds to the group's questions throughout process.

The group hears from curated speakers organised by the host organisation (a set of speakers with diverse and opposing views), however, the group does not select its own speakers.



### TIME

Deliberation occurs over less time (2-3 days). Participants may also be asked to undertake their own local conversations using e.g. a deliberative style conversation kit. There is time for people to become better informed and engage in dialogue together. There is less time for reflection and grappling with trade-offs before coming to agreement on recommendations. The 80% super majority may be harder to attain in this shorter timeframe.



### REPRESENTATIVE

Fully or partly randomised group of participants. The deliberative group possibly includes some targeted participants.

A randomised group of people might also be asked to consider an issue and their input compared alongside those not randomised.

# LOW SCALE

## PROCESS WITH DELIBERATIVE ELEMENTS

If all principles are enacted at a low scale, or only some principles were enacted, it would be considered a **process with deliberative elements** and would be **involve-consult** on the IAP2 spectrum.

### INFLUENTIAL

No promise made.

There is no presentation of the output to the Council decision makers rather all input gathered through the engagement activities is summarised usually by council officers or a consultant.

The organisation responds (or not) to the input with a 'response document' outlining what they have done with the ideas collated.

Senior decision-makers are not involved in the process.

### DELIBERATIVE

Organisation presents options and participants share their thinking but no shared ideas or levels of agreement are sought.

### INFORMATIVE

Clear background materials (simpler in style) are provided. The organisations responds to the group's questions during the workshop.

### TIME

Participants may be asked to deliberate in different ways, not always face-to-face or synchronous online processes. This might include a values based survey/poll, a deliberative online asynchronous conversation. There is little time for dialogue and no time for resolving the different of views of participants in workshops of one day or less.

### REPRESENTATIVE

Self-selected participants, invited stakeholders, and, where possible, some randomly recruited participants.

# NOT DELIBERATION

## CONSULTATION

If no deliberative principles are enacted, then this is **not considered deliberative practice** and would be **consult** on the IAP2 spectrum.



### INFLUENTIAL

These activities are usually low influence, for example: survey, drop-in, or submission process.

No promise made.

All input gathered through the engagement activities is summarised usually by council officers or a consultant.

Senior decision-makers are not involved in the process.



### DELIBERATIVE

Participants identify ideas in response to a set of questions or a pre-prepared document/options. Views expressed are an immediate reaction, and based on personal experiences, offering only a very broad sense of public opinion.

Often participants produce a list of possible ideas that the council will need to assess and decide upon.



### INFORMATIVE

Limited or no information provided, or the information provided is simple and doesn't delve into the complexities and trade-offs around an issue.



### TIME

No time to think. Immediate opinions or responses are received from people who are usually involved in council engagement activities and who have shared their thoughts with council previously.

No effort is made to bring people together and hence find common ground amongst people with different views.



### REPRESENTATIVE

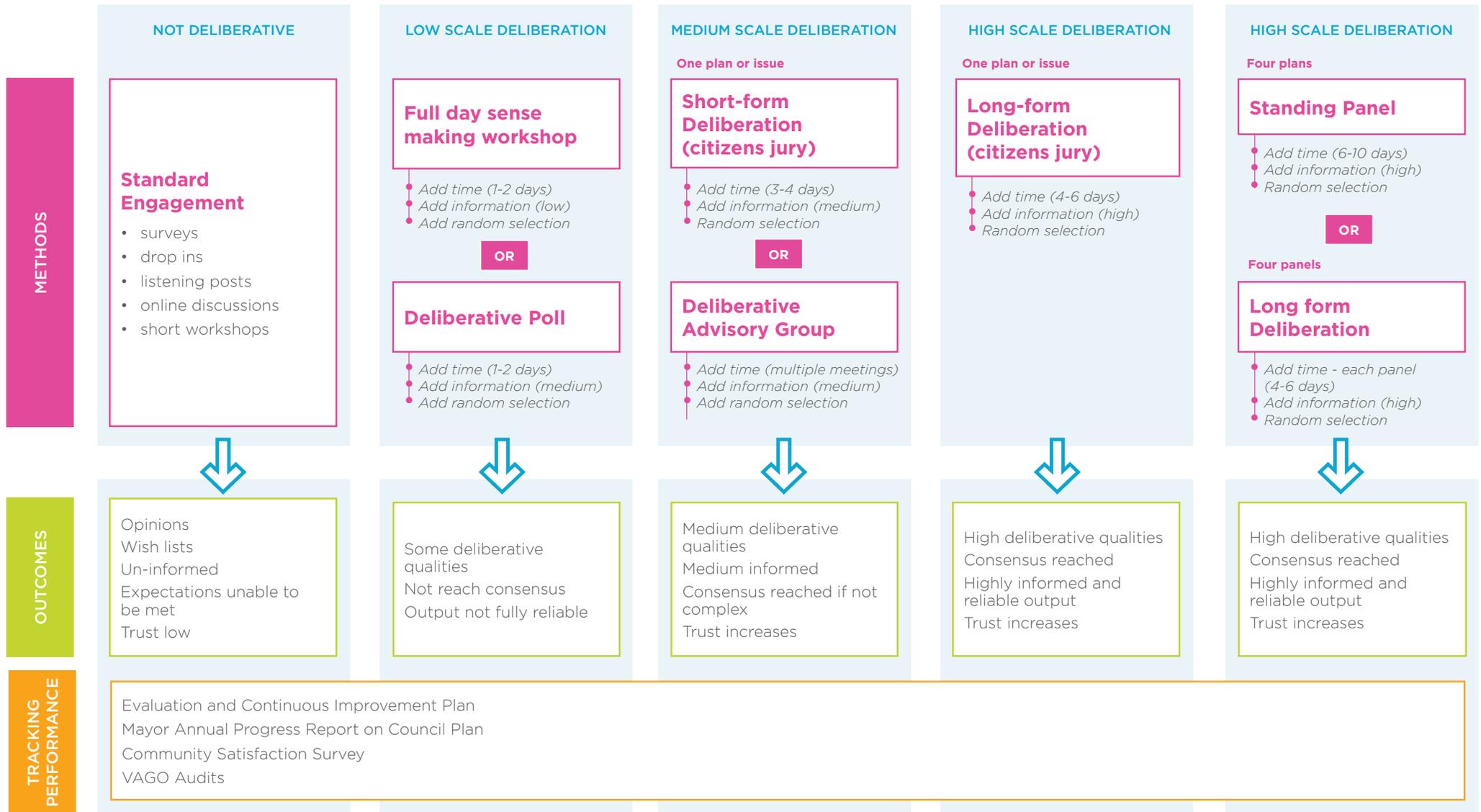
Completely self-selected participants – often those most likely to take part are people with a high interest or stake in the issue such as members of interest groups or people with more time available to get involved.

# DELIBERATIVE ENGAGEMENT

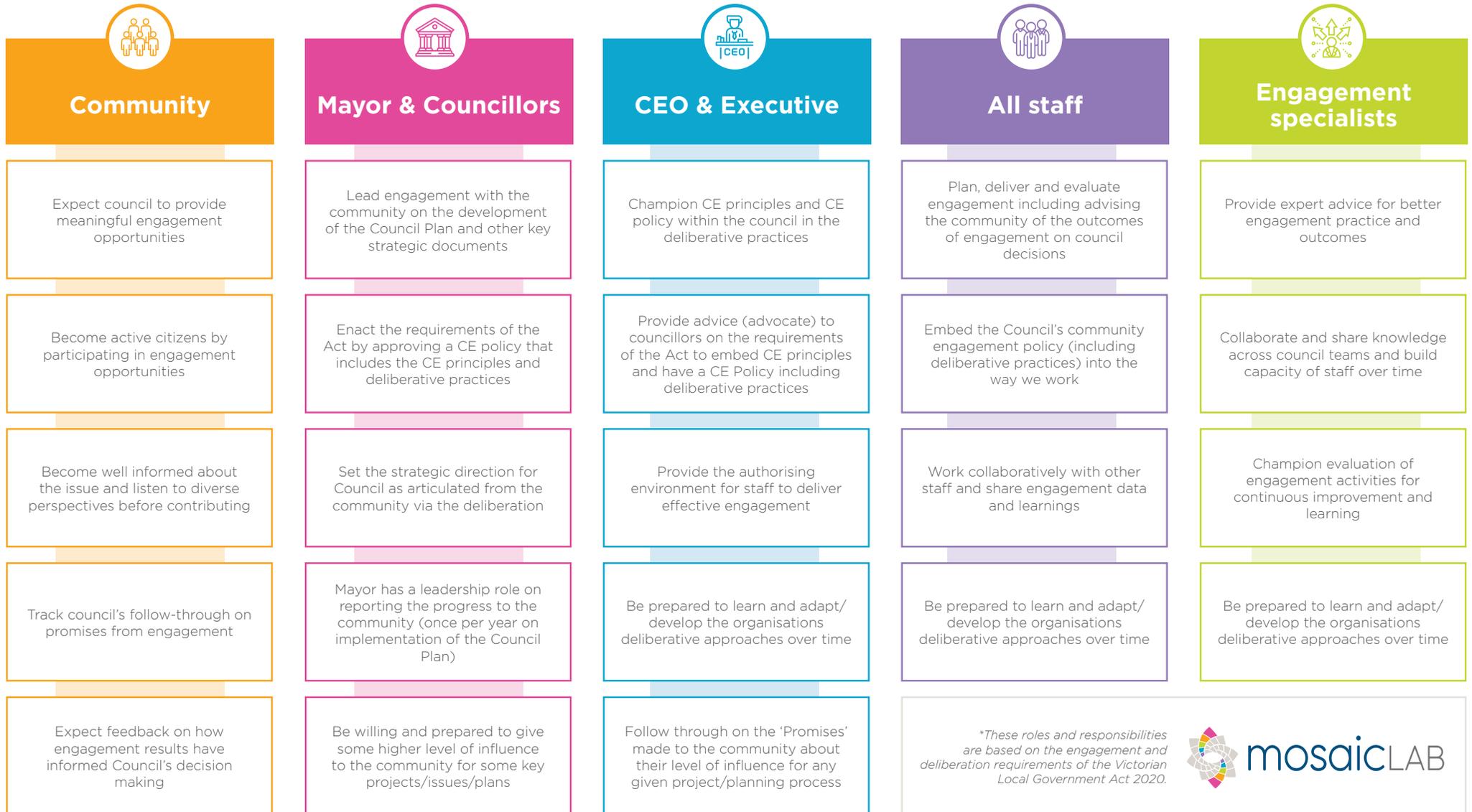
Options at each scale

**Always**

- High influence (collaborate)
- Reporting back
- Clear remit
- Clear promise



# ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES FOR GOOD PRACTICE ENGAGEMENT



# DELIBERATION READY ASSESSMENT

Readiness Criteria Heading	Description	Low	Med	High
		Do rarely or reluctantly	Do sometimes	Do often or willingly
<b>Leadership Environment</b>	<p>Your elected officials understand what a deliberative process means and support the process</p> <p>They are committed to seeing through the process and letting a random group of people explore the topic and decide a good way forward (they do not lose their nerve)</p> <p>They appreciate that people can understand complex topics when given the time and information to do so</p>			
<b>Organisational Decision Making</b>	<p>Senior decision makers and project managers in your organisation make decision effectively and can make a call about projects 'on the go' quickly and efficiently when projects require it</p> <p>They see the value in robust deliberations by people affected by a decision</p> <p>Senior decision makers understand the difference between deliberative processes and 'more common' engagement processes</p> <p>Key decisions are not made prior to the deliberating group making their recommendations</p>			
<b>Project Scope</b>	<p>Key projects in your organisation are complex (no simple answers) and involve trade-offs that need to be explored</p> <p>Your organisation is willing to provide a high level of influence to key projects that are tricky and sticky</p> <p>The organisation is willing to spend time defining a clear, plain English and open remit/question for consideration by a random group of people</p> <p>Decisions will be made in line with the principles of deliberation throughout the project</p>			
<b>Staff Capacity</b>	<p>Your project staff have the time to commit to a deliberative process, they have the skills to fill the necessary roles that the organisation needs to fulfil.</p> <p>Your staff understand the difference between deliberation processes and engagement processes</p> <p>There is a willingness to innovate and try 'new' things and have the commitment/nerve to hold true to the principles when challenged</p>			
<b>Communication Style</b>	<p>Your organisation's communication style is responsive and adaptable; open to being transparent about the process (i.e. actively placing stories and updates on social media throughout the process, or through engaging newsletters, actively maintaining stakeholder email listings etc) and the people involved in a way that actively engages with the broader community.</p> <p>Your communication avenues use flexible approaches and a language that drives openness and learning</p>			



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