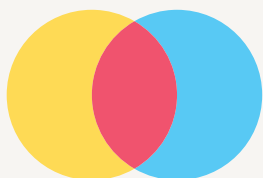


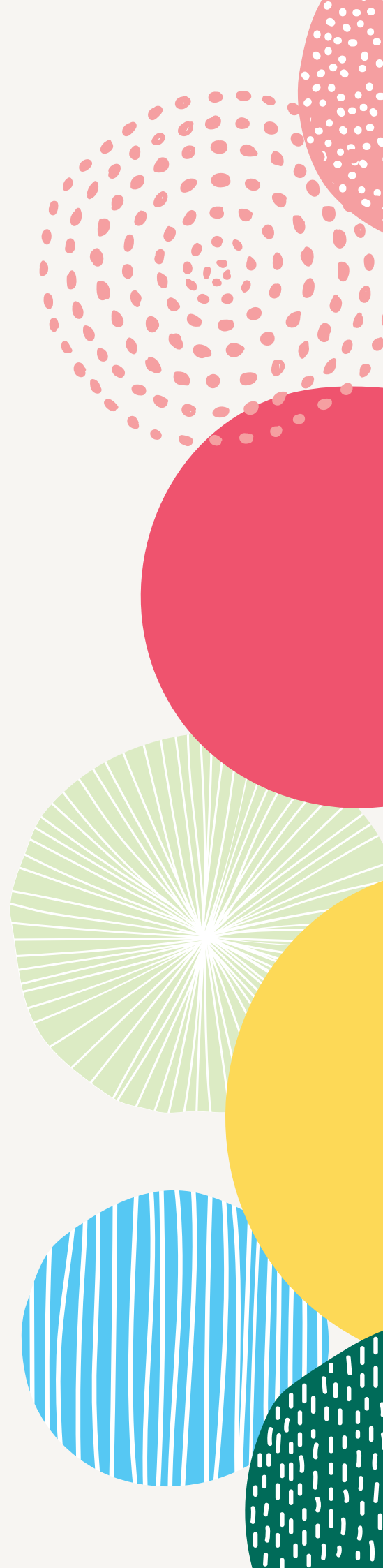
Access Health and Community  
**Community Engagement  
Framework**

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**2023**



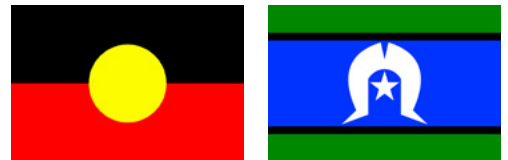
**ACCESS**  
Health & Community



## Acknowledgement of country

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Access Health and Community acknowledges the Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung people, who are the Traditional Owners of the land on which we work. We pay our respects to Wurundjeri Elders past and present and future and extend that respect to other Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. We acknowledge that sovereignty was never ceded.



## Message from Gayle Austen, Board Chair and Anna Robinson, CEO



Access Health and Community’s (AccessHC) Community Engagement Framework is helping to give voice to people in our communities, with more opportunities to participate in decisions that impact the health and wellbeing of their communities.

We know that for too many people, navigating the health system can be disempowering. They can find it difficult to access vital services.

But it doesn’t – and shouldn’t – have to be this way.

In our 2022-25 strategic plan, AccessHC committed to make it easier for people to access our services by removing barriers to people connecting with us.

To do so, we must transform how we work. The framework encourages us to seek out and consider the ideas, views and aspirations of our community, and use this input to reflect, develop and improve our programs and services.

Valuing the experience within our local communities and listening – including to those who are ‘hardly reached’ by services – is key to breaking barriers and delivering on our mission of building healthier lives together.

For our communities, their participation may increase the diversity of voices on organisational committees, provide opportunities for our workforce to learn from the community and contribute feedback that informs new service development or the way we interview for new roles.

This aligns with the development of our Reconciliation Action Plan and our active support for the self-determination of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities. The framework will also connect with our work recognising the lived experience that consumers, carers and families bring to conversations. It will also be highlighted within our new Service Model.

Importantly, the Community Engagement Framework had input from consumers, community, partners, volunteers, our executive, staff and Board. We would like to thank everyone who provided us with such a wide range of feedback and support.

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**The new framework provides an approach, commitment and guide to support our people to actively engage communities and continuously improve the way we work to better lives.**

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This constant focus on evolving to meet the needs of our communities is the reason AccessHC has been successfully operating for over 150 years.

We are proud that this Community Engagement Framework will help to build on this legacy, so that we can improve access for all and achieve even greater impact for our communities into the future.

## Who we are

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Access Health and Community (AccessHC) has been taking care of people in Melbourne's eastern suburbs for over 150 years, and more recently the northern metropolitan region. Our experienced and compassionate staff support clients to meet their personal health goals.

We ensure our community is connected with accessible and affordable health and community services, and partner to create places and spaces that enable our communities to live healthier lives.

### MISSION

**Building healthier lives together**

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### VALUES

#### **Equity**

We believe everyone is entitled to good health.

#### **Collaboration**

We work together to achieve our goals.

#### **Respect**

We work with courtesy and include others.

#### **Innovation**

We drive innovation for better care.

#### **Quality**

We strive to be the best at what we do.

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### STRATEGIC PLAN

Our Strategic Business Plan states that we will: 'remove barriers to people connecting with us'. We will do this by engaging our communities and involving them in decision making.



## Who is our community

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We engage with people who live, work, play or access services across the majority of Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung Country in the east and northern metropolitan regions of Melbourne.

AccessHC recognises that particular groups in our community face increased barriers to accessing and participating in health and community services. Our work prioritises people from the following communities, experiences and backgrounds:

- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander
- Culturally, linguistically and religiously diverse
- Refugees and those seeking asylum
- Veterans
- Living with a disability or mental illness
- Financially or socially-disadvantaged
- Homeless or at risk of homelessness
- Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Intersex or queer (LGBTIQ)
- Living in out-of-home care, forced adoption or removal.



## How do we define community engagement?

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Community engagement is a process whereby we seek out and consider the ideas, views and aspirations of our community, and use this input to reflect, develop and improve our programs and services.





## Why a community engagement framework?

At AccessHC, we believe that *building healthier lives together* requires the input from those who use our services, as well as workers, partners and our diverse communities. Specifically when we engage with people who use our services, this is also known as Consumer Participation.

In developing this framework, we have held multiple conversations with our internal management staff and volunteers. **We have also consulted clients and aligned services and colleagues.** Collectively, we have identified numerous reasons to engage and to maintain a community engagement framework.

These reasons include:

- Our community is diverse and their needs change over time.
- Our programs and services need to be constantly adapting to meet client needs and aspirations.
- Our community includes those who may find it difficult to come forward without support. This includes people whose languages are other than English, those who are new to Australia and not familiar with engaging, people with a disability and people who may feel marginalised.
- We believe that good engagement leads to better outcomes for our communities.
- We aim to be a leader in the delivery of quality health services and believe that good engagement enhances our day-to-day practice.



## Our community engagement framework

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Our community engagement framework describes how we engage with our communities of interest. It outlines the principles that guide our practice and includes tools and templates to support teams to plan, deliver and review engagement strategies.

The application of a consistent framework will help us to embed engagement into our day-to-day practice. It will build confidence in our approach and support us to honour the input received and incorporate it to the fullest possible extent.

This framework aligns with the Safer Care Victoria: Partnering in healthcare framework (2019) to work together and share decision making for the service and organisation/system. For example, this may include diverse participation on an advisory committee, a working group or seeking feedback to inform service design, planning and policy, updating resources, quality improvement or governance. This participation will also be supported by the AccessHC Reconciliation Action Plan and Lived Experience Framework.

The scope of this Community Engagement Framework does not include:

- Individual direct care – other frameworks support this participation, such as person centred care approach and patient activation measures.
- Marketing and promotion – the Communications team can support the engagement of potential consumers.

AccessHC is regularly accredited against a number of industry quality standards, all of which have a significant Consumer and Community Engagement focus. This in itself is a reflection of how important Community Engagement is to our industry and its governing bodies. The standards support continuous improvement through regular needs assessment and planning to ensure that service and program design respond to identified and unmet community needs. In particular, the standards require that we:

- Understand our Consumers and our Communities.
- Ask them their opinion about the services we provide.
- Involve them when we are making decisions about future service provision.
- Ensure that our staff understand the importance of Consumer Engagement and this Framework.

For a list of each of the standards AccessHC is accredited against, see Appendix 1.



# Our engagement approach – the principles

Our approach to community engagement is guided by the following 5 principles:

Principle	Our Commitment
<b>1</b> <b>Consumer/ community knowledge</b>	<p>We make the effort to understand who our community are, what their priorities are and what they care about.</p> <p>We understand that to engage effectively, and to reach those that do not easily engage, we will need to use diverse methods to suit the different people we are engaging with.</p> <p>We seek out and listen to our community on how they would like to be engaged.</p>
<b>2</b> <b>Planned engagement</b>	<p>We understand why we are engaging.</p> <p>We plan our engagement in a consistent and coordinated way.</p> <p>We provide the tools and build in adequate time and resources to support meaningful participation.</p>
<b>3</b> <b>Inclusive engagement</b>	<p>We actively seek out those who are impacted and interested.</p> <p>We actively seek out a diversity of voices, including those individuals and groups that may not be easily engaged.</p> <p>We are flexible, actively consider equity in participation and are able to provide for a range of needs (including accessibility requirements).</p>
<b>4</b> <b>Genuine engagement</b>	<p>We ask the questions that we need answers to.</p> <p>We listen to and consider the engagement feedback.</p> <p>We understand how the feedback will be used.</p> <p>We are transparent about how the engagement feedback was used and share this by 'closing the loop' with participants.</p> <p>We are honest and open in our communications.</p>
<b>5</b> <b>Continuous improvement</b>	<p>We support our people to engage by providing tools, training and mentoring.</p> <p>We evaluate the quality and impact of our engagement processes at a program and organisational level on a regular basis.</p> <p>We use what we learn to improve what we do and how we do it.</p>

## International Association for Public Participation (IAP2)

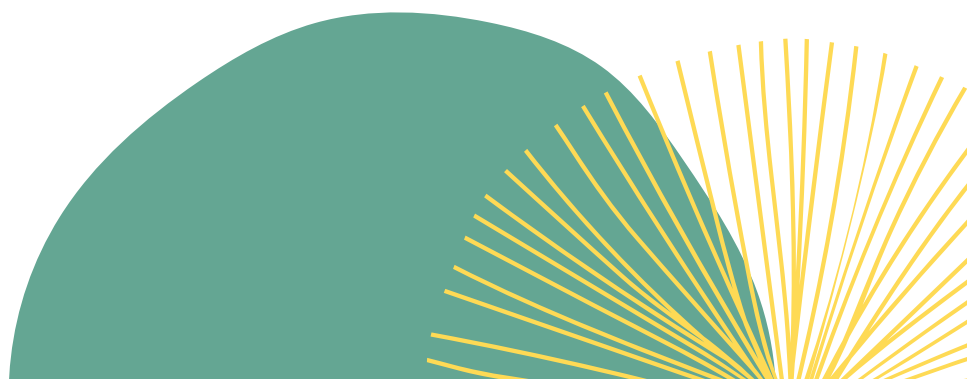
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Our engagement practice is guided by the International Association for Public Participation (IAP2). IAP2 provides the foundations to support good practice community and stakeholder engagement and communications, including the practice Core Values, the IAP2 Spectrum of Participation and Practice Ethics. AccessHC will apply IAP2 foundations in the planning, delivery and review of our engagement.

### IAP2 CORE VALUES

The IAP2 Core Values define the expectations and aspirations of the community engagement process.

1. Community engagement is based on the belief that those who are affected by a decision have a right to be involved in the decision-making process.
2. Community engagement includes the promise that the public's contribution will influence the decision.
3. Community engagement promotes sustainable decisions by recognising and communicating the needs and interests of all participants, including decision-makers.
4. Community engagement seeks out and facilitates the involvement of those potentially affected by or interested in a decision.
5. Community engagement seeks input from participants in designing how they participate.
6. Community engagement provides participants with the information they need to participate in a meaningful way.
7. Community engagement communicates to participants how their input affected the decision.



## International Association For Public Participation (IAP2) *continued*

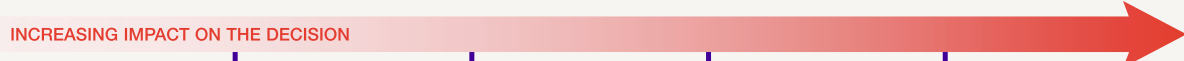
The IAP2 Spectrum is designed to assist with the selection of the influence the community can have in the decision making process. Differing levels are all legitimate – depending on the aim, objectives, timeframes and resources.

Where co-design is used, it will value all participants as experts with equal standing. In relation to the IAP2 Spectrum, the public participation goal and promise will be equal to 'collaborate' and AccessHC is to be the final decision maker.

### IAP2 Spectrum of Public Participation



IAP2's Spectrum of Public Participation was designed to assist with the selection of the level of participation that defines the public's role in any public participation process. The Spectrum is used internationally, and it is found in public participation plans around the world.

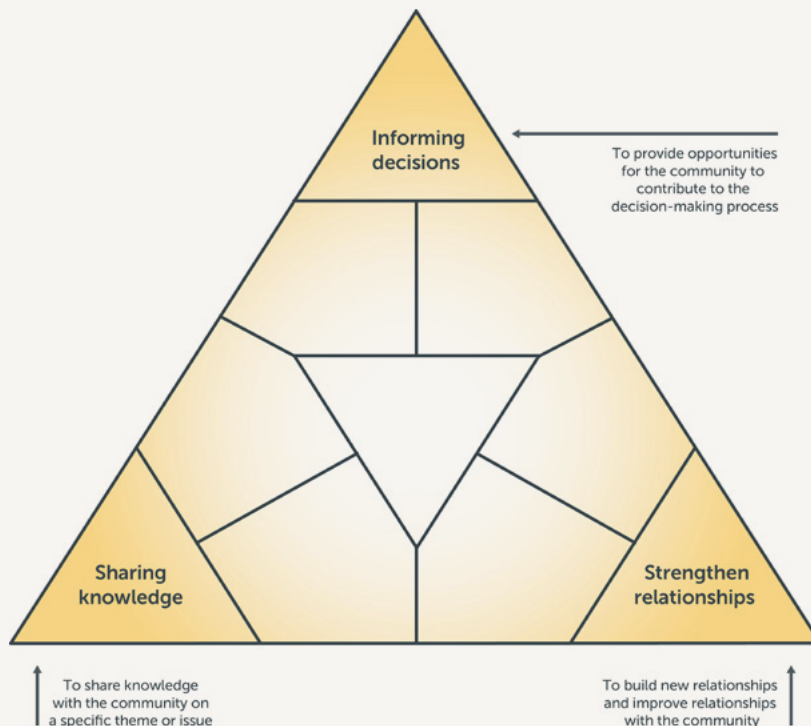
INCREASING IMPACT ON THE DECISION 					
	INFORM	CONSULT	INVOLVE	COLLABORATE	EMPOWER
PUBLIC PARTICIPATION GOAL	To provide the public with balanced and objective information to assist them in understanding the problem, alternatives, opportunities and/or solutions.	To obtain public feedback on analysis, 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 Capire Triangle

We also draw upon the Capire Triangle in our engagement work. Developed by Capire Consulting Group, the Engagement Triangle can be used in the early stages to determine the purpose of engagement.

It helps to clarify the engagement goals, map stakeholders and determine the appropriate engagement methods. While informing decisions is likely to be the primary purpose of our engagement, the Capire Triangle demonstrates that sharing knowledge (building capacity of community to be involved or building capacity of the organisation learning from community) and strengthening relationships can also influence outcomes of engagement to a greater or lesser extent.

For example, an engagement process could involve consumers in a working group to inform decisions about the design of a new program. During and between these working group meetings, there will be opportunities to strengthen relationships with these consumers, and to share knowledge (learn from consumers' expertise, share more about the organisation, strengthen skills for future participation). Therefore, the process of engagement itself is important, as well as informing decisions to create a better program.



## Who we engage

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We have a wide variety of individuals and groups who we will engage using the Engagement Framework. This includes:



### **Clients and their family and carers**

Those people who use our services and are directly impacted by the work we do, and those who care for them. This is sometimes referred to as Consumer Participation.



### **Community**

Those people who may be potentially impacted by the work we do (potential clients, residents, neighbours, businesses, people with lived and living experience).



### **Stakeholders**

Organisations and institutions who are or may be impacted or interested in the work we do including community organisations, peak bodies and government departments.



### **Volunteers**

Those people who share their time and skills to work together with the organisation.

We will undertake a community and stakeholder mapping exercise as part of our engagement planning.

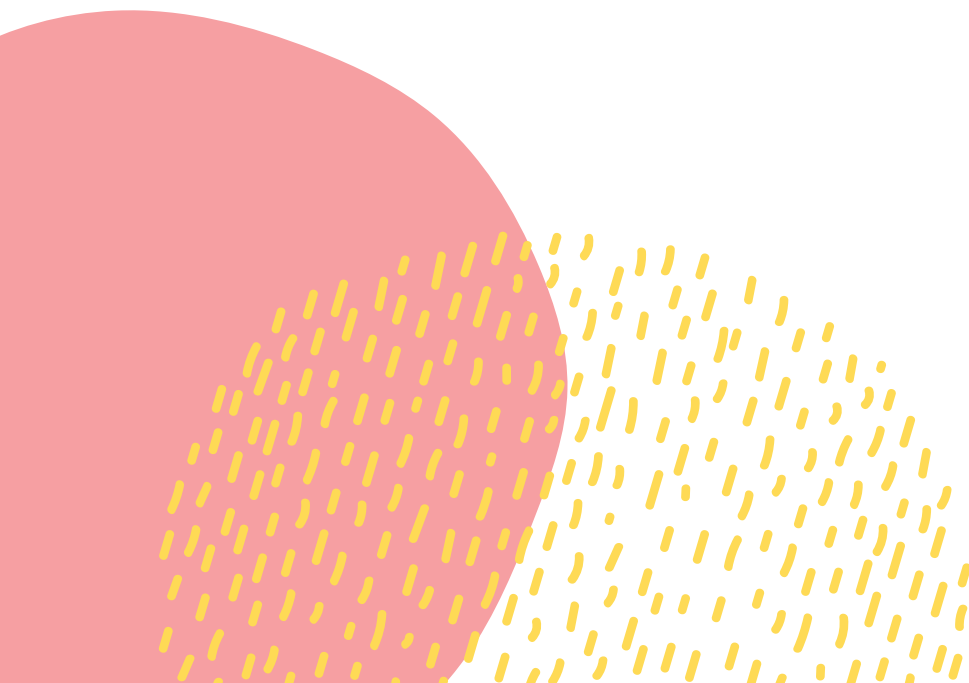
## How we engage

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Our engagement will be planned and documented. What follows is a step-by-step process of our approach.

These steps are further outlined in a supporting guide attached (Guide 1: Planning and Delivering your Engagement Program).

1. Obtain commitment to engage.
2. Define the aim and objectives of the engagement.
3. Identify the stakeholders and communities.
4. Define the level of engagement.
5. Develop the community engagement plan.
6. Deliver the engagement activities.
7. Review and analyse the information obtained through the engagement processes.
8. Evaluate the success of the engagement and share lessons learnt.
9. Apply the outcomes of the engagement to inform the decision-making process.
10. Report on the feedback and 'close the loop' on the engagement.





## Roles and responsibilities

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While we believe that everyone at Access Health and Community has a role in the community engagement lifecycle, some of these vary.

### BOARD

Approves the Framework

### CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER

Overall responsibility for the Framework

### EXECUTIVE

Strategic direction, decisions and approvals

Resource allocation

Accountability for delivery, review, action and reporting of community engagement framework and plans

Accountability for acting on engagement outcomes and ensuring we 'close the loop'

### STAFF / PROJECT TEAMS

Develop and deliver community engagement plans consistent with the Framework

Reporting of engagement outcomes and closing the loop

Implementing outcomes from the engagement process

### COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT TEAM

Supporting project teams to develop their community engagement plans and supporting them to deliver

Providing community engagement advice

### ALL WORKERS

Awareness of Community Engagement Framework

## Monitor and review

We recognise the importance of regular monitoring and review of our community engagement framework and approach. To do this, we will undertake evaluation at a program and organisational level.

### PROGRAM LEVEL

At this level, the evaluation can be incorporated into the engagement plan and undertaken throughout the process. This could include:

- Evaluation forms after, or before and after an engagement event
- A 'lessons learnt' workshop held with key participants at the end of the engagement process.

### ORGANISATIONAL LEVEL

At this level the organisation will review its engagement approach after the first 6-months of the initial implementation, then annually. This could take the form of a survey to gauge understanding, use and satisfaction levels. Targeted workshops may also be undertaken with users and non-users of the Framework to further investigate areas for improvement. Findings from these reviews will be incorporated in the Framework post-review.



## Community engagement framework guides

The framework is supported by four guides and two templates that provide information on how to implement engagement programs to support a consistent approach across the organisation.

The guides are here for you to use to ensure that all engagement programs meet AccessHC's requirements.

### GUIDES

At this level, the evaluation can be incorporated into the engagement plan and undertaken throughout the process. This could include:

1. Developing a community engagement plan
2. Reaching a diverse community
3. Monitoring and evaluating community engagement
4. Facilitation guide

### TEMPLATES

1. Community engagement plan
2. Evaluation scorecard



# Appendix 1

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## ACCREDITED STANDARDS

- Quality Improvement Council Standards (QIC), especially:
  - Consumer and community involvement: The organisation has structures and systems to ensure consumer and community opinions are heard and acted upon.
  - Community and professional capacity building: The organisation works to strengthen the capacity of the community it serves and the professional sector to which it belongs.
- Human Service Standards (HSS)
- Aged Care Quality Standards (AACQHS)
- headspace Model Integrity Framework (hMIF)
- National Standards for Mental Health Services (NSMHS)
- Royal Australian College of General Practitioners (RAGCP)
- National Safety and Quality Health Service Standards (NSQHS)
- Child Safe Standards
  - Standard 3: Children and young people are empowered about their rights, participate in decisions affecting them and are taken seriously.

## GUIDES AND FRAMEWORKS

- AccessHC Reconciliation Action Plan and Lived Experience Framework
- Safer Care Victoria (2019), Partnering in healthcare: a framework for better care and outcomes
- Empowerment and Participation: A guide for organisations working with children and young people. The guide is designed to assist organisations to empower and involve children and young people more fully in their organisations. It draws upon Child Safe standards and contains guidance, tools and tips for engaging with young people aged zero-18.
- Victorian Department of Health and Human Services, Doing it with us not for us: Strategic direction 2010-13
- Australian Commission on Safety and Quality in Health Care, Australian Charter of Healthcare Rights 2008
- International Association of Public Participation, Public Participation Spectrum and Core Values



**Building healthier lives together**

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