

Kate Eccles, Member CAC, Harbour Trust
30 Morella Road, Mosman 2088
kseccl@ozemail.com.au

Rebecca Hage, Media and Stakeholder Engagement Officer
rebecca.hage@harbourtrust.gov.au

December 2020

HARBOUR TRUST

Re: Draft STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT STRATEGY and GOVERNANCE FRAMEWORK

Congratulations to The Harbour Trust on a well set out and comprehensive document

After considerable community engagement, this draft Stakeholder Engagement Strategy and Governance Framework is comprehensive and detailed. The format includes useful “see at a glance” tables e.g. Table 4 Stakeholder objectives and formats

Particularly commendable are the responses to the Recommendations of the Review, and responses to engagement and consultation. The Trust listened carefully to the CAC’s concerns and the suggestions made at a series of meetings. The Strategy and Framework include many of the recommendations made by the CAC and the community.

Relevant Review Recommendations and Actions

Review recommendation 8

8.2 Reconstituting and refocusing the CAC: CAC to be more directly involved in priority setting; attendance of at least 1 Member of the Trust at each meeting

Action CAC to be reformulated; “always on” consultation; governance to be refreshed; Members of the Trust to be encouraged to attend CAC meetings. Agreed.

8.4 Members of the Trust and management to be more actively engaged with stakeholder groups – volunteers, community groups at a site by site level

Action Members of the Trust’s interactions with stakeholders including CAC to be transparent, planned and coordinated. Greater attendance at CAC committee meetings by members of the Trust and reported to Chair and Executive Director (P19); reports of CAC meetings to go to Trust Board meetings. The reports should be minuted and where a decision by Trust members is not in accord with stakeholders’ views or advice, the decision should be explained. The community needs to feel that it has been heard, and to understand the reasons for decisions. The Trust must be seen to be genuine, engaging and consulting broadly and honestly, allowing time and noting views.

New members of the Trust should understand this strategy and framework before being appointed.

Many of the above arrangements are to apply to staff members’ interaction with stakeholders also.

Review Recommendation 10

Engaging and consulting with contiguous land managers re joint events to enhance visitor experience of Trust lands

- A necessity at North Head.

2.

- At Middle Head, Georges Heights and Chowder Bay a focused engagement on a seamless transition between Trust and NPWS lands is essential for an interpretation of the headland.

Review Recommendation 14

A partnership with Dept of Defence Environment & Engineering Branch to support interpretation of military history - establishment of a formal stakeholder group strongly approved.

Trust Engagement with CAC and Consultation on the Stakeholder Engagement Strategy and Governance Framework

Outcomes of CAC's and others' recommendations

- CAC requested a Statement of Philosophy at the beginning and in objectives and outcomes: The statement includes the main objectives of engagement.
- A broadening of the stakeholders to be engaged and consulted
- CAC requested improved communication between CAC and Trust members, greater transparency from Trust members, assurance that its views would reach Trust members, that CAC views were heard and discussed and to be informed of the outcome of those discussions (addressed in the Strategy – Trust members interaction with stakeholders)

Comments on the Engagement Strategy

What the Trust has got right for deeper community engagement

- Broadening the stakeholders
- Broadening the matters for consultation
- The 6 Initiatives for deeper engagement
 1. Broader, "always on" engagement
 2. targeting specific interest groups – from a specific location or a community of interest
 3. Using the Advisory Committees – the reconstituted CAC to provide general input and to communicate with their own communities thereby broadening the Trust's reach and engagement; the Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander Committee to provide much desired input from this key stakeholder group; improved governance arrangements
 4. government forum including all levels of government and contiguous land managers e.g. local councils and NPWS
 5. and 6. Sympathetic commerciality and expert advice

Tables

Table 4: useful and informative

Table 5: perfect

Table 6: agreed

Table 7 for decisions affecting the Comprehensive Plan, Management plans, policies: very important

Further comments

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander engagement and the formation of an advisory group is an excellent development. It is noted that each member of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander group should attend one meeting annually of the CAC. So that the CAC could be better informed, would it be desirable for information on particular issues of relevance to be given to the CAC in advance? Would it be possible for a meeting to be attended by more members of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander group than just one. Such a meeting could be informal if that would encourage a better flow of information.

Particularly commended in this strategy is broadening stakeholders and the methods of engagement that will include additional methods.

I attended the recent tour of 10 Terminal and Parklands and the workshop on 30th November. This was a particularly constructive event, apart from some experts not having had sufficient notice. Success lay in the inclusion of government representatives, known advocacy groups, zoom participants, and people with particular interests and expertise – art, RSL and the use of heritage sites.

Interaction of Trust members with CAC

“They (Trust members) are custodians of a finite common resource which they manage on behalf of the public (suggest the addition of the words, “**present and future**”)

Attendance of Trust members at CAC meetings is very desirable. However, if the item being discussed is not well understood by members of the CAC, it might be advisable for the CAC to have a preliminary meeting.

The other listed interactions will result in an improved level of confidence that CAC views are being heard.

Governance Framework – CAC

Role, Statutory basis, Terms of Reference, etc all agreed

Commitments of Committee members: No 8 remains an area of uncertainty. Members of the CAC are expected to convey information to the wider community and to “encourage others to engage”. Members who are part of an advocacy group have a particularly valuable role to play in this respect. At the same time they are bound not to disclose information that is sensitive or commercial in-confidence. This can be difficult as it may be in the community’s interest to know. When a matter is confidential, it should be clearly stated, the reasons given, and an estimated time frame until disclosure to the broader public is permitted.

With thanks to staff who compiled this strategy and framework and conducted community engagement.



Kate Eccles
CAC member
President Mosman Parks & Bushland Association