

**FAIR GO RATES SYSTEM  
ENGAGEMENT TECHNICAL WORKING GROUP**

**Notes from the third meeting  
8 September 2016**

**Attendees:**

Name	Organisation	Name	Organisation
Angelina Garces	Essential Services Commission	Desley Renton	Melbourne City Council
Lisa Horsburgh	Essential Services Commission	Rosemary Scott	Mitchell Shire Council
Andrew Chow	Essential Services Commission	Ross Goeman	Monash City Council
Merryn Wilson	Essential Services Commission	Vicky Mason	Mount Alexander Shire Council
Kathy Jones	KJA Associates (Independent Facilitator)	Juanita Haisman	Manningham City Council
Malcolm Lewis	Baw Baw Shire Council	Dr Sarah Ewing	Victorian Local Governance Association
Joel Farrell	Hume City Council	Jenny McMahon	Wyndham City Council
Kim Rawlings (via phone)	Knox City Council	Kathy Pryor	Local Government Victoria
Edith Heiberg	Latrobe City Council	Ray Campling	Yarriambiack Shire Council

**Apologies:**

Name	Organisation	Name	Organisation
Owen Harvey Beavis	Municipal Association of Victoria	Laura Potter	City of Greater Geelong
Mark Ritch	IAP2	David Woodhams	Strathbogie Shire Council

*The ESC has formed an Engagement Technical Working Group. The purpose of this group is for the ESC to have input from council professionals into its engagement guidance material and, conversely, to provide feedback to councils about the decisions and actions that the ESC has made in the context of councils' engagement programs. The attached meeting notes are a reflection of the themes of these discussions undertaken at the meeting between the ETWG and the ESC on 8 September 2016.*

**Purpose of meeting**

- To discuss the learnings from the first round of applications for a higher rate cap.
- To identify areas where the Commission's guidance material for councils for the rating year 2017-18 should be updated and refined.
- To understand any further issues and opportunities for Councils and the Commission in the subsequent years of the FGRS.

## Key Discussion Points:

### Key suggestions for the revised guidance material

(Both for the engagement chapter & the web based resources)

- Further develop case studies which will be hypothetical, are contextualised around the LG Act Review, are focussed on next year's applications and align with community reference material
- Edit guidance and community reference material to acknowledge the importance of community engagement in the decision making process
- Engagement implications to the two proposed timelines (same process – acknowledge this in the material)
- Needs vs quantum (clarify around different types of engagement)
- Short term vs long term (clarify around different types of engagement)
- Acknowledge capacity (community & Council in guidance chapter)

### Suggested guidance material updates

There was a discussion around what should be included in the revised Guidance material for Councils for future applications. The points from this discussion included:

- Clarify the ESC's position on debt
- Inclusion of something like an evidence matrix to show how a Council's application for a higher cap might demonstrate it has met the community engagement requirements
- Top 10 Tips (initial thoughts included):
  - Size doesn't matter
  - Demonstrate council's history of effort in cost reduction, consultation, plans
  - Explain long term funding need based on date and trends
  - Engagement should be focused on the outcome
  - Councils should have an engagement Plan, integrated with Council processes at the front-end of planning
  - Engagement should focus on options
  - How have chosen engagement techniques contributed to the revisions for the application
  - Engagement is about the big picture (not one of short term goals).

Item	Actions	Responsibility	Date
1.	Community Satisfaction Survey suggestions	All	At next meeting
2.	Format of note taking should be in the form of discussion points plus specific actions	KL / LH	Meeting notes distributed prior to next meeting
3.	Revised Guidance Material should be available in mid-October	NOTE	
4.	<u>Try</u> for VAGO, LGV, ESC meeting to discuss coordination of approach on engagement and how it relates to the next iteration of the Guidance Material	AC	ASAP
5.	Evidence Matrix should be presented as an engagement version of the long term funding need slide	ESC	See below
6.	Circulate Top Ten Tips, Engagement Evidence Matrix, revised case studies for comment	ESC	29 <sup>th</sup> September
7.	Case Study Sub group - Rosemary, Juanita, Desley, Kathy	LH to convene	ASAP
8.	Capability and capacity around SRP's varies widely within both community and Council	NOTE	
9.	<u>Try</u> to distribute whole Guidance Book by end Sept to ETWG. If not, then revised Engagement Chapter	AC	29 <sup>th</sup> September
10.	Next meeting 6 October at 3.30pm at ESC	NOTE	