

Dear Stakeholder Engagement Framework Review team,

As I am most likely unable to attend the workshop I would like to put forth my feedback on the Engagement Framework. My feedback is mainly centred around the 4 principles in section 5 of the framework document.

Principle 1 - Clear, accurate and timely communication

For equity among stakeholders I recommend that it be added that “all stakeholders are offered the same range of methods and mediums to communicate”. This will ensure fairness and prevent bias or favourable treatment to specific stakeholders.

For the feedback to be meaningful, I recommend “a clear summary of what are the key areas, and weighting of those areas, that will influence the decision/outcome should be unambiguously communicated to the stakeholders upfront.” For simplicity even a “heat map” type of representation might be sufficient but this means that prior to the engagement process starting the decision makers need to be able to articulate what factors will influence their decision. In the real world this requires decision makers with integrity, honesty and courage to be able to publicly stand by their principles. If the decision makers are not capable of this you might as well throw out the engagement process and save some money because it is only for show and to tick boxes.

Whilst it mentions the communication of the summaries of key issues and impact of decisions, what is missing is the communication of the context or background of the underlying project/decision. I would recommend adding wording that reflects this.

Principle 3 – Transparent

So that activity with each shareholder is transparent I recommend that it be added that “report publicly the number of engagements with each stakeholder, dates and method/medium”

Principle 4 – Measurable

The overall principle should be wider as measurement should not just be on the effectiveness of the engagement process but also on what is being engaged on and the overall outcome.

Firstly, when measuring something you need to have 4 basic things; what you are measuring, how you are measuring, what your targets are and finally what actions to be taken when targets are not met. In the document you really only look at what and some of the how. What is clearly missing is the establishment of targets for each of the things being measured and actions to be taken when targets are not met. Therefore, I recommend that it be added that, “Clear objectives for each of the measurable criteria are to be set along with actions to be taken in case the objectives are not met”

What is also missing is a measurement of the weighting of the engagement feedback as part of the decision process. Stakeholders need to understand what influence their feedback has on the overall decision and weightings should be assigned to it. It also should be stated up front for the project what weighting will be given overall to the feedback component. I recommend adding that, “feedback from the engagement process will be assigned an overall weighting at the start of the project and this weighting will be published in addition feedback is to be categorised and their overall weighting in the decision process published.”

Table 1 – Stakeholder Engagement Spectrum

Under the Empower column it states that “To place final decision making in the hands of the public.” This is clearly not happening in practice as decisions are made by AER management and not the public. I suggest changing the wording or actually implementing a public poll that will give the final decision making in the hands of the public.

I would appreciate the above feedback be taken into consideration for the review of the Stakeholder Engagement Framework and am open for further discussion on any of the points made above.

Regards,

Martin Vizjak