

Translating Scientific Understanding of Climate Change Impacts into Effective Policy Response – The Critical Role of Stakeholder Engagement

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EXTENDED ABSTRACT

Translating improved climate change information into effective local adaptation response by local governments requires a methodology that addresses three important steps. We propose that key local stakeholders must:

1. Understand and acknowledge the need to respond to climate change;
2. Access useful data and develop an understanding of the science; and,
3. Gain support from a wide spectrum of decision makers and implementers within an organisation.

The three steps will assist project teams to break down the complex elements of such projects and work towards effective outcomes where science can be integrated into policy.

The achievement of these three key steps relies on effective communications and stakeholder engagement techniques including facilitated workshops that allow discussion, meetings and presentations to a range of stakeholders within relevant organisations and communication resources that are carried out throughout the life of the project.

Two Western Port Adaptation projects have or are currently utilising a range of techniques to engage local and regional stakeholders with the aim of ensuring that the three conditions for effective local adaptation response are addressed.

This paper draws on communication and stakeholder engagement methods that have been used in these studies and the initial outcomes of the most recent Western Port project to support the contention that stakeholder engagement is critical to ensuring that the three key steps are met.

