



# Communication Strategy

This framework supports the delivery of communications  
for the Peron Naturaliste Partnership.

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## INTRODUCTION

### Aim

Our aim is to ensure that information flow and sharing within and external to the Peron Naturaliste Partnership (PNP) is well managed and appropriately coordinated. Furthermore to ensure information feeding into and out of PNP is coordinated by PNP Officers under direction from by Board Members.

### Background

The Peron Naturaliste Partnership region is situated in SW Western Australia. It comprises the nine local governments of Bunbury, Busselton, Capel, Dardanup, Harvey, Mandurah, Murray, Rockingham, and Waroona. These parties have agreed to work collaboratively with state and federal government in order to support building a resilient regional community with a focus on reducing risks and optimizing opportunities presented by climate change and climate variability.

The Peron Naturaliste Partnership has appointed two part time Coastal Adaptation Coordinators on biennial contracts, starting from July 2016 (with scope for extension of contract) who will manage their operations and administer a project that will explore regional coastal adaptation pathways into the future.

A direct action as prescribed in the Strategic Plan is for Coordinators to develop and implement a Communications Strategy in line with the PNP Strategic Plan.

## Guiding Documentation

- ❖ PNP Constitution, MOU Agreement, Strategic Plan and the annual Operational Plan

## Objectives

- To provide a coordinated approach to information sharing within the PNP
- To ensure effective and efficient communication and public participation
- To provide practical structure and direction in relation to communications
- To complement strategic direction of the PNP Strategic Plan 2016-2019
- To have an integrated approach to managing coastal climate change adaptation
- To guide on-going two way communication with the public
- To protect the existing partner's organisational brand, image and reputation
- To provide direction for future public consultation and engagement
- To guide external communications with stakeholders, media, residents and rate payers
- To guide internal communication to build capacity of councillors and council staff
- To develop a regional collaborative approach with identified internal and external stakeholders in order to build a resilient community focused on long term sustainability
- To reduce risk and optimise opportunities presented by climate change and climate variability

## Our Values

The PNP commits to a set of values that guide our attitudes and behaviours in line with the Peron Naturaliste Region's Local Government Values and Behaviours. The PNP is committed to:

1. Helping council's and communities adapt to change and will proactively seek new opportunities.
2. Showing leadership to develop and strengthen relationships and networks with our stakeholders and partners
3. Encouraging partnership and collaboration to communicate, consult and engage with each other and our communities and appreciate their importance
4. Seeking to promote accuracy, honesty and truthfulness at all times.

## Key Benefits

The key benefits of the adopted approach to communications planning are:

- The effective and well managed communication and transfer of information will reduce the risk of alarm in the community (compared to if the report was released or information was released without appropriate dialogue with the community)
- Potential to build community ownership of the project and its outcomes
- Increase the community's capacity to adapt will potentially increased
- To present the PNP partners as proactive and transparent
- Coordinated management of information flow to ensure sensitive information is communicated effectively

- Generate accurate and informative media around Climate Change Adaptation in the PNP region

## Identified Issues

It is important to identify any potential issues and challenges when communicating complex information such as Climate Adaptation in the PNP Region.

The key issues identified include:

- Public Inquiries may require PNP partners or Project Officer to respond to contentious questions relating to Coastal Adaptation / Coastal risk
- Sensitivities around the management and release of generated data and reports
- Potential related insurance issues for council's and residents / businesses
- Legal liability issues related to Climate Change
- Timeframes and milestones for project delivery may be at risk without timely and effective communication between consultants, project officers and input by PNP representatives
- Potential inconsistencies in messages in the release of materials of a sensitive nature
- Risks related to councils' brand image and reputation
- Community concern around impact on real estate prices in 'at risk' areas
- Potential increase in expectations for council to manage all risks
- The outputs of the PNP are constrained by the limited capacity and resources available and funding dependent

## COMMUNICATION FRAMEWORK

This framework supports the delivery of communications for the Peron Naturaliste Partnership. This includes communicating key messages and benefits, in addition to reducing risk exposure from identified issues. This is a strategic planning tool and is to be put forward on a bi-annual basis for officer review, direction and approval at a PNP Quarterly Board Meeting.

The PNP Communication Framework will:

- links to current best practice initiatives and ensures an agreed approach to PNP future actions
- Protects the existing partner's organisational brand, image and reputation
- Benefits the community in adaptive capacity, building resilience and empowerment.
- Provides direction for future public consultation and engagement
- Guides external communications with stakeholders, media, residents and rate payers
- Guides internal communication and capacity building with councillors and council staff

## Knowledge Management

A focused knowledge and information management procedure supports delivery of timely and accurate communications. This guiding document ensures all information flow within the PNP is well managed and appropriately coordinated. Thus, to ensure the right messages

are being shared with the relevant stakeholders and to ensure there is a coordinated approach to information sharing and timely management of sensitive information.

## Data Management

The PNP is responsible for obtaining and managing data and will be increasingly working with member councils in Coastal Data Management for the region.

The PNP is increasingly obtaining and managing its own coastal monitoring data for coastal risk management purposes. Information relevant for both at a regional scale and to member local governments. The PNP has quality assurance check and review built into all project specific data. The PNP Coordinators work with PNP member Local Governments through the Coastal Management Committee as to include information at each local government level as required.

## Key Messages

The PNP is responsible for communicating complex information and representing a diverse range of representative councils. It is critical that there is a consistent and accurate message being shared both within the Peron Naturaliste Partnership and to identified external stakeholders and community members. The agreed key messages are as follows:

- We need to prepare for in a changing climate
- Some Climate Change is unavoidable
- We are planning now for an uncertain future
- Adaptation is a shared responsibility—governments, business and the community all have a stake and a role in responding to climate change impacts
- The nine local government bodies within the PNP region have implemented an innovative regional collaborative approach through the Australian Government funded Coastal Adaptation Pathways project in partnership with identified internal and external stakeholders in order to build a resilient community focused on long term sustainability
- The PNP's effort reduces risk exposure and optimises opportunities presented by climate change and climate variability.

There is a detailed procedure for delivery of the key messages in the Communication Methods section (below), to be reviewed on an annual basis. These key messages will be expanded upon through updating the PNP Community Engagement Strategy.

## Audience

This framework is designed to provide a process for targeting and engaging the following audience in up to date climate change adaptation science, planning and policy and related projects in the region:

- PNP Officers (internal)
- PNP Board members (internal)
- PNP Committee Members and project Steering group Members (Internal)
- Council Staff (internal)

- Councilors (internal)
- City of Mandurah Tender and Procurement Team (internal)
- Consultants (internal and external)
- Advisors (internal and external)
- Project Partners - i.e. Curtin University's Coastal Collaboration Cluster, NCCARF's Adaptation Research Projects, Federal Government, WA Department of Planning, Department of Transport, Department of Water, WA Department of Environment and Conservation, WALGA Climate Change Group (internal and external)
- Stakeholders - i.e. UWA and CSIRO Researchers, other government agencies, businesses, industry, other regional networks, broader community (external)
- Media (external)
- Public i.e. community members, community groups, residents, associations, business, industry and Visitors (external)
- State and Federal Government (external)
- Regional NRM and Development Bodies (external)

## Communication Methods

### Internal Communication

|  |                             |
|--|-----------------------------|
| PNP Board Meeting and Officer Report   | March<br>July<br>November   |
| PNP Executive Committee Meeting  | February<br>June<br>October |
| Planning and Management Committee Meeting                                      | March<br>August             |
| Peron Naturaliste Post (and external)  | Quarterly                   |
| Elected Member and Council Staff Capacity Building and Education (as required) | AS REQUIRED                 |

### External Communication

#### 1. Media Communications

An agreed content for media response and to encourage accurate and informative media around the PNP and its activities and outputs by:

- Develop and distribute information based on the Key Messages identified in this framework
- Communicate current scientific knowledge to target audience
- Timely release of endorsed project outputs to target audience
- Timely response to media requests for both state and national media – print, online, television and radio
- Being proactive in producing accurate media articles for Local media and responding to inaccurate generated media both print and radio
- Generate local media releases at the inception of major projects and

- Generate local and state wide media release at the conclusion of major projects along with Q and A Information Sheet.

## 2. Web-based Tools

Develop existing PNP Website as a web-based guidance framework to assist decision makers and the broader community with furthering their understanding and adapting to the impacts of climate change. This is to:

- Create links to PNP regional Local Government websites
- Develop PNP website to include relevant web links, PNP project updates and endorsed project reports
- Generate online resources
- Seek opportunities for generating social media
- Develop PNP web site to provide the public with project reports and PNP Member's with a Local Government member page access (with internal password access).
- Produce quarterly PNP Newsletter to distribute and make available online
- PNP to support development of and make links to existing state and national web-based tools (particularly NCCARF - Coast Adapt Toolbox and WALGA Toolbox)

## 3. Capacity Building

Create opportunities for capacity building for climate change adaptation in the PNP Region; such as;

- To present to each council and the broader community as required on project findings
- Provide each council with existing documentation and other relevant stakeholder resources
- Make councillors and council staff aware of any training or personal development in relation to climate adaptation planning in the region
- provide councillor briefs and support development of council reports
- provide each Board Member with all PNP information on website and hard copy annually
- Support councillors and council staff in the region to attend workshops and forums and seek to undertake relevant training.

## 4. Community Education

Create new opportunities for education and use existing resources and stakeholder networks for education and community involvement. This aims to:

- Engage with and present relevant information to special interest groups and focus groups
- Involve PNP in existing public workshops and community forums related to climate adaptation in the region
- Develop and distribute PNP community resources and relevant educational resources.
- Encourage use of online WALGA Toolkit and NCCARF Coast Adapt Online Toolkit.

## 5. Stakeholder Engagement

Target all stakeholders (as identified) in a multi-faceted approach. This will:

- Create both informal and formal opportunities to engage with existing stakeholder groups
- Attend stakeholder meetings and workshops run by government bodies and the scientific community.
- PNP to present at stakeholder workshops and forums where deemed appropriate by Senior Officers
- Access, distribute and contribute to project partner Publications
- Access and contribute to existing Local Government Publications from the region

## 6. Public Participation

In line with the International Association for Public Participation training and education that is adopted by Local Governments across Australia, the PNP encourages a communicative approach to public participation as follows:

- Develop Community Engagement Strategy
- Delivery of Stakeholder and Community Workshops in partnership with identified stakeholders
- Assisting coordination of regional coastal adaptation conferences and events
- Partner with stakeholders to partner and/or support run local events

## Evaluation

- As per PNP Operational Plan, PNP will evaluate its processes every year using MERI method. (Measure, Evaluate, Report and Improve)
- PNP Coordinators will provide an Annual report on all actions and communications
- Revise and enhance Communication Framework every 3 years
- An external audit should be undertaken on a regular basis to assess quality of project outputs and how well actions have been implemented.

## Conclusion

The PNP Communication Strategy provides both a framework and methodology clear and agreed communication. This is the framework for all internal and external communication agreed by PNP Board and Committee Members and actions undertaken by PNP Coordinators.

This strategy is designed to ensure timely and responses to the community and to ensure we work together with partners, stakeholders and the community to ensure high quality project outcomes and met and well communicated. This strategy and its priority aims and objectives are in line with the PNP Strategic Plan, MOU agreement and specific projects.