

Chapter 5:

A Model for Monitoring and Evaluating Public Participation

5.1 Introduction

Considering participation requires specifying the types and extent of participation possible or observable. Types of participation are linked with methods or channels of communication. The extent of participation is the amount of participation offered by those with authoritative control over the decisions, typically the government. It must be remembered that offering participation says nothing about the intensity or direction of communication (Coenen et al 1998).

Greater and more effective public participation and community consultation in decision-making is one of the key triggers for reform of coastal management, alongside global environmental change, sustainable development and integrated resource management. The discussion in Chapters 2 and 3 focused on the availability of opportunities for public participation in CZM. Australia's commitment to public participation is enshrined in national legislation (NSED 1992) and international agreements (Agenda 21, 1992). Agenda 21 states that:

"one of the fundamental prerequisites for the achievement of sustainable development is broad public participation in decision-making" (UNEP 1992).

The legislative sanction of public participation in decision-making (top-down) has been complimented by an increase in community expectation (bottom-up) of the desire for a share in the vision and ownership of decisions that affect their lives. The discussion generated in the previous chapters as well as the case study examinations have demonstrated that there is a need for a more prescriptive description of public participation - across levels of government, programs and policies, and in a format that is able to be independently evaluated. This Chapter attempts to incorporate the information from a number of models that will describe the essential components of a model that can be used for monitoring and evaluating the role of the community in decision-making for CZM in NSW. To this end, this chapter has three main goals:

- to establish what sort of questions need to be asked when a public participation program is being developed (timing and process);
- to develop a system that enables public participation programs to be evaluated in terms of a common set of standards; and
- to identify whether the information generated at a program level can be imported into the policy development and review process.

5.2 Background

Public participation and community consultation are recognised alongside economic and environmental indicators as being a vital component of the environmental management process (Draft NSW Coastal Policy 1994, NSW EPA 2000). Integrated environmental planning and management programs and policies that involve public participation are generally set within a certain paradigm that asks a specific set of questions in order for this process to be realised (see Table 5.1).

Table 5.1 Examples of Paradigm Questions for CZM Programs

<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Who should take the lead?• What is the role of government?• Who are the communities and what is their role?• What is the role of other stakeholders?• What are the long-term goals?• What are the short-term objectives?• How are these goals and objectives achieved?• How is evaluation conducted?

Source: Adapted from Meltzer 1996, Connor 2000a.

These questions need to be answered in order to establish the framework (visions, goals, objectives and process) for any CZM program or policy. They will set the operating paradigm for both decision-makers and the public. It is from this basis that public participation programs can be carried out. Precisely how these objectives are carried out and what steps or stages are emphasised will vary depending on the nature and scope of the proposed action, the public's perception of the agency or organisation promoting the program, the location, size and scale of the affected area, and the time, resources, and expertise of the lead agency or organisation (after Burdge and Robertson 1990).

5.3 Criteria for the development of a public participation program

To date, there has been no universally acceptable model for evaluating public participation strategies, however, there are a series of general themes that emerge from case study examinations, including the studies from the previous Chapter:

- agency personnel tend to measure success in terms of the extent to which a program is accepted by those involved in it and the extent to which the image of the agency has been improved;
- citizen groups appraise programs by the success they have in preventing or modifying a proposed course of action, or the attainment of a broader recognition of the group, or public at large, in the decision-making process;
- independent observers look for how well a program meets its objectives, the degree of representation and the accuracy of information gathered; and

- cost, time, effort or resources are used as evaluation criteria by some agency personnel (after Sewell and Phillips 1979).

In practice, all four of these criteria need to be met when developing a model to evaluate public participation programs. For example, Sewell and Phillips (1979) argue that a model might be a good indicator of public participation from an 'Agency' perspective because it evaluates public participation in terms of:

- enhanced public acceptance of planning decisions;
- public participation programs as a data source for planning activities; and
- the usefulness of public participation programs in terms of educating the public so that they will acquire skills that can be used to deal with planning problems in their own communities.

These criteria, however, fall short of satisfying some of the key objectives for public participation in general (see Table 3.3) as identified by Conacher and Conacher (2000) and public participation programs specifically, according a set of evaluation 'criteria' developed by Connor (2002). These include:

the development of informed, visible, majority public understanding, acceptance and support for a valid proposal (Connor 2002) (see Table 4, Chapter 3 for more detail).

As well as this, inadequately run programs may also trigger many of the reasons listed in Table 3.8 for inadequate public participation programs. Nevertheless, Thomas (1998), points out that even a limited evaluation process provides some sort of guidance, and can be useful when used in conjunction with other evaluative mechanisms. Evaluation models need to be able to be used by practitioners - whether they are Councils, Agencies, Developers or Community Groups: to define the social indicators that are relevant to their particular program; and to enable social indicators to be monitored and evaluated, thereby allowing them to become a measurable component of environmental monitoring and thus be included in environmental reporting and the decision-making process. The argument put forward by Sewell and Phillips (1979) was that existing mechanisms failed to ensure that all relevant viewpoints were taken into account. By recognising that both the broader objectives for public participation as well as the more specific requirements for public participation programs need to be met and any program, plan or policy needs to be independently evaluated so that it can be verified. For example, McCool and Guthrie (2001) orientate public participation around two themes: product-orientated measures; and process-orientated measures (see Table 5.2 below).

This type of analysis allows the superimposition of Englander *et al's* (1977) model which classifies CZM processes into either 'Resource Outcome' or 'Organisational Process' categories, but also allows for the move from a 'reductionist' planning framework to a more integrated system, which includes not only greater public participation in the decision-making process,

but also an articulation of the value of the process of participation as a measure of the success of a program or policy.

Table 5.2 Program and Process Evaluation Criteria for Public Participation in CZM Policies and Programs

Program-Orientated Measures	Process-Orientated Measures
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Plan Written • Plan Implementation • Socially and Politically Acceptable (plan, program or project justified to the wider community) • Information for planning new projects is provided • Sufficient jurisdiction, authority and resources • Clear and consistent policy objectives • Acceptance (public) of the proposal. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Learning <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Content (public understanding of the issues / problems) • Process • Interpersonal • Staff competence and commitment • Responsibility <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Managers Responsive • Develop publics sense of Ownership • Demonstrates worth of group or organisation • Relationship Building <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Between Managers and Publics • Among Publics • Between the public and elected officials • Interest Representation <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Being Heard • Maintaining the program's priority on the public agenda. • Process <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improves the focus and procedures of a project as it proceeds • Majority public understanding • Open to all citizens

Source: Adapted from Mazmanian and Sabatier (in Cullen and Sorensen 1986), Woodhill and Robbins 1998, McCool and Guthrie 2001, Connor (2002).

5.4 Criteria for a Model

The methods by which public participation is sought are many and varied. For each participation program the techniques(s) used to provide opportunities and seek public participation are likely to vary. In particular, the techniques(s) used will depend on the objectives of the program. If an objective is to have the public involved in making decisions about a proposal, it is pointless using only information dissemination techniques (after Thomas 1998).

As discussed in Chapter 3 and earlier on in this Chapter, in the past the assessment of public participation programs or involvement in the decision-making process has not been adequately assessed. Without identifiable and reportable indicators, monitoring and evaluation of the role of the community/public involvement in a manner that might be iterative and useful, has been

near to impossible. The problem is two-fold. The first issue is that because of the *ad hoc* nature of public participation programs which were often initiated without guidance or without predetermined outcomes, against which success could be measured. The second issue is that evaluative criteria have generally followed on from the implementation of public participation programs and in many cases, there simply has not been a 'toolkit' with which to evaluate programs. The Table below provides a summary of key components that can be used to measure a program from its inception. The criteria include operational paradigms and individual technique and program criteria as well as a series of indicators against which the 'process' of participation can be measured. This last indicator series, when combined with questions about operating philosophy and the iterative, interactive and integrated nature of the program or process, make this model unique.

There are, of course other indicators that can be applied. For example, Table 3.5 'Summary of Requirements for Successful Public Participation Programs' provides a summary of criteria that can be used to map out the development, review and evaluation of programs. These requirements can be summarised as:

- The public;
- The process;
- The objectives;
- Decision-making; and
- Monitoring and evaluation.

As well as this, the 'Indicators for Success in Public Participation Programs' (Table 3.9) is appropriate to evaluate public participation programs.

This model presented in Table 5.4 (below) has been developed using information collected from an extensive literature review as well as adapting information from older designs (see Arnstein 1969, Munn 1979, Sinclair and Diduck 1992). It is by no means comprehensive and needs to be used in conjunction with the criteria listed in Table 5.3. Together, the information provides a basic structure for evaluation of community consultation and public participation programs and also serves to outline where future analysis may drive the process.

Table 5.3 Criteria for monitoring and evaluating the role of the community / public in the decision-making process.

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide a list of widely recognised (eg ANZECC or NSW EPA SoE approved) techniques. • Provide a capability statement for each technique, eg <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • cost and time of activity, including scoping studies, • ability to handle specific interests, and • level of contact achieved with community, • Provide a set of evaluation criteria for each activity, eg <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ability to deliver information, • ability to receive information, and • ability to facilitate discussion. The model presented in Table 3 provides an example of how this can be achieved. These criteria enable a ranking system to be established. • Provide program evaluation criteria, eg <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • does the program support integrated / adaptive management, • is the program robust enough to support activities such as scoping studies, mediation and facilitation, • does the program incorporate ESD, • can the community effect the program vision, • does the program recognise that there may be multiple publics, and • does the program incorporate a variety of public participation measures (this can also be weighted). • Provide a system for 'process' evaluation. In practice, all the conditions for evaluating process-orientated measures described in Table 2, are unlikely to be met during the initial implementation period of any program, however, they will function as a checklist against which periodic progress can be compared. • Provide scope for the model to be independently evaluated (verified). • Be established within a paradigm that incorporates an adaptive management philosophy.
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Table 5.4 Public Participation Evaluation Model

Communication characteristics					Public Participation / Communication Techniques used	Specific Technique Evaluation Criteria						
Cost	Audience	Level of citizen participation (Arnstein's ranking system)	Level of two-way communication	Ability to handle specific interests		Inform and / or educate stakeholders	Identify problems / values	Generate ideas / solve problems	Deliver feedback	Resolve conflict	Allow the process to incorporate new information	Provide an evaluation of the process at identified milestones
↑ ↑ Depends on scale of activity ↓ ↓		Depends on lead agency philosophy or who conducts the assessment			Audio / Visual							
			1	1	Film / video	X						
			1	1	Radio / TV ads	X						
					Computer-based methods							
			1	1	Public access to electronic data	X						
					Media							
			1	1	Advertising	X						
			2	1	News releases (inviting comments)	X			X			
					Plain language							
			3	3	Communication with the public	X			X			
			2	1	Legislation / Policies	X						
					Public meetings							
			3	3	Conferences	X	X	X	X			X
			1	1	Exhibits/displays	X						
			3	3	Dinners / BBQs / picnics	X	X	X	X	X	X	
					Citizen training programs							
			3	3	Organised hearings	X	X	X	X	X	X	

Communication characteristics					Public Participation / Communication Techniques used	Specific Technique Evaluation Criteria						
Cost	Audience	Level of citizen participation (Arnstein's ranking system)	Level of two-way communication	Ability to handle specific interests		Inform and / or educate stakeholders	Identify problems / values	Generate ideas / solve problems	Deliver feedback	Resolve conflict	Allow the process to incorporate new information	Provide an evaluation of the process at identified milestones
			3	3	Workshops	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
↑ ↑ Depends on scale of activity ↓ ↓		Depends on lead agency philosophy or who conducts the assessment			Direct / Individualised services							
			1	3	Direct mail	X						
			3	2	Phone lines	X	X	X	X		X	
			1	2	Submissions		X		X		X	X
			2	2	Surveys		X		X		X	
					Pedagogy							
			2	2	Participatory drama	X			X			
					Publications							
			1	2	Brochures / Pamphlets	X						
			1	2	Feature articles (depends on source)	X	X	X	X		X	X
			1	3	Internet	X	X	X	X		X	X
			1	2	Reports / Discussion papers	X	X	X				

Key: 1 = Low 2 = Medium 3 = High

X = Capability

This model, however, is insufficient in itself. It needs to be complimented with a number of other evaluative criteria. Importantly, for the model to be successful, it must sit within an adaptive framework that allows for multiple iterations, adaptations and corrections to the model. This adaptive or integrated framework in turn sits within an overarching institutional paradigm which delivers the vision for CZM.

Communication / Participation Techniques and Technique Evaluation Criteria

In terms of identifying communication / public participation techniques, the model is particularly useful because it provides a ranking system. By importing Sinclair and Diduck's (1992) 'Checklist of Environmental Assessment Techniques', the list of techniques can be grouped into categories, which provides community groups, Agencies or proponents with a range of communication techniques according to their needs. The techniques are evaluated in terms of conditions such as their ability to:

- Inform and / or educate stakeholders;
- Identify problems / values;
- Generate ideas / solve problems;
- Deliver feedback;
- Resolve conflict;
- Allow the process to incorporate new information; and
- Provide an evaluation of the process at identified milestones.

Communication Characteristics

For a model to be useful, it needs to take into account issues such as time available (for consultation and for action), experience of actors/participants, training requirements, available budget and most importantly, identify the target audiences. It is for this reason, factors such as cost and target audience need to be included as evaluation criteria. For a number of organisations (eg community groups, local Councils, small-scale developers) the perceived cost of an activity can be prohibitive. It is therefore important to have an understanding of the message that needs to be delivered (see 'Fitness of Purpose' Table 3.4) and the advantages and disadvantages of the techniques available so that the best possible options can be developed. For best results, it would be appropriate to use these tools in conjunction with the model presented in Table 5.4. One of the key messages to come out of the literature on public participation programs is that in many cases, a proponent may have implemented a general consultation program without a particular goal and a particular target audience in mind and the result has been that neither the goal is achieved nor is the target audience (the community) adequately consulted (after Bass *et al* 1995, Coenen *et al* 1998).

One of the critical factors reflecting on the success of public participation strategies is the timing of the programs. The literature is littered with reports of community consultation programs that have failed or only partially succeeded because of time constraints. Consultation

takes time and the lack of guidance for public participation and consultation programs or the lack of knowledge and skill on the part of the actors has often been the root cause of failure. The key to success is to involve the public (stakeholders) from the start of the process. Anything less than this may contribute to suspicion and lack of confidence in the process (after Peterkin 1999, Harding 1998, Shindler & Cheek 1999).

The concept of a 'scoping study' which prepares a 'social profile' of a community or a region is an important component of any environmental assessment and will help to determine a list of potential stakeholders and the direction that community consultation will take (after Burdge 1990, Connor 2001). Many proponents have commented that it is often cheaper (financially) to involve the public in programs from the inception than to initiate a damage control program midway through a process. However, this all depends on the type of involvement that the proponents see as being necessary / legitimate in the first place. Proponents have to be aware that public participation can be unpredictable (Harding 1998). The consequences of not including community input, or of a mistimed or badly managed program of public participation can cost the proponent of a development project or policy / procedural changes, substantial time-delays, resources and public confidence.

Participation programs consume resources (time and money), so it makes sense to try and use the most effective techniques. Measures of effectiveness only come from evaluation of previous programs and their successes and failures.

Program and Process Evaluation

While 'program' and 'process' evaluation criteria have not been built into the model, they are nevertheless essential components of the evaluation process. As previously identified, a number of models have been criticised because of their inability to be independently evaluated or because they are designed specifically for Agency use and evaluation. For any model for public participation to be successful, it needs to be available and useful to a range of actors, including the public, industry and government. Arnstein's (1969) 'Ladder of Citizen Participation' is one of a number of such models (see Pretty *et al* 1993) that attempt to rank the level of influence that the public and community groups have in the decision-making process. This type of schematic analysis serves to compare the intention of an actor with the reality of the process as well as allowing for different actors to independently rank each other's performance - and can therefore provide a valuable evaluation tool. The risk for some institutions (government or private sector) is that:

- finding and implementing sound solutions for environmental problems may necessarily require continuing and broadened participation far beyond the 'usual' experts and political elites; and

- environmental decision-making often requires a shift of resources and opportunities from some groups to others, thus raising inherently political questions (after Coenen *et al* 1998).

In the Byron Shire case study, community involvement in the decision-making process has produced lengthy time delays on the development of the Shire's Coastline Management Plan and may have had a destructive influence on the process in general. Often, community groups can be highly sectoralised. The issue of representation is an important issue. The problem for BSC is that whilst Council recognises that there is public disagreement over some of the key issues, they have not implemented a facilitation or dispute resolution process to deal with these specific issues. Many traditional channels of communication and participation - in this case, stakeholder committee meetings - provide a very narrow band for community action and may not be effective.

The Coastline Management Committee meetings do not allow for specialised debate which needs to be dealt with in a more appropriate forum. The risk of not embarking on such a process is that any decisions made may turn out to be unenforceable or require further legal action to implement. Such meetings may even undermine existing relationships or encourage an escalation of adversarial behaviour (after Susskind and McCreary 1985). Burton (1990) argues that traditional methods of conflict management are failing in modern societies to a degree that is becoming increasingly unacceptable, and there is no reason to believe that these levels of conflict will not continue to escalate. We are therefore forced to consider our approach to dispute resolution and to factor in the longer-term costs of bargaining and negotiation into the decision-making process.

One of the reasons for evaluating 'program' and 'process' indicators is that clearly defined objectives for public participation programs aid in the evaluation of the program and its approach. Program evaluation criteria can be categorised in terms of 'outcomes' and 'process'. Table 3.9 provides a broad overview of some of the 'Indicators for Success' that can be used in the review process. For more specific evaluation criteria, Table 5.2 (above) describes some of the key criteria that can be monitored through this process. These indicators can be used in conjunction with the process specific 'Program Objectives' described by Connor (2002) in Table 3.5 to measure a number of the key program goals and objectives. Allen and Whenua (1997) believe that with the help of appropriate participatory and systems-based processes it may be possible to help meet the different needs of those involved and develop 'win-win' strategies.

5.5 Discussion

For some community groups, the major outcome of any public participation program will be the final result, that is their impact on the particular program or development proposal. For these groups, the result is about a specific outcome, irrespective of the process involved. To this extent, a model that evaluates each technique - by assessing its purpose, time involved, costs, level / scope of impact and the level of expertise needed to carry out each activity, are all that is required. The model described in this Table 3 accomplishes this.

There are, however, two other issues that come out of this discussion. Firstly, as the Kempsey Shire case study demonstrates, the 'result' was the most significant issue at stake. Information currently to hand is that the Proponent plans to submit a new DA for the region. This time around, if the DA is presented to Council, the Proponent as well as the relevant government agencies, should expect to face a community that is familiar with the planning and legislative framework and the avenues available for redress. The upshot of this is that the whole process will be taken to a higher level of debate. The community, local and state government and the proponent will actively monitor the program of consultation.

Secondly, there is a bigger picture that needs to be addressed - and that is the 'process' of involvement. At an individual activity, project or program level, this may be quite minimal but the cumulative effect of this process has been recognised as a vital trigger for future plan and policy development and review and must be considered an important factor in the decision-making process. The substantive difference between developing an evaluation model for 'programs' versus one for 'policy' development and review is that the evaluation system for 'policy' must have the scope to deal with (evaluate the process of change or otherwise) issues like institutional change in government and organisations.

In the past, state government agencies have traditionally been removed from the demands of public pressure because local government was the most responsive participant, the first port of call for the public. Over the past decade, these agencies have been increasingly exposed to direct public contact. Much of this has to do with the availability of information on the Internet. It is at this stage that the cumulative effect of 'process' must start to have an effect on the institutional arrangements in place for policy development and review. It is much harder to assess the process of public participation at this level because it is one step removed from the actual activities. Chapter 2 provided a discussion of the current institutional arrangements for monitoring and evaluating public participation in decision-making at this level of government. If multiple organisations have responsibility for collecting data, then there needs to be some sort of formalised process to coordinate this data, by locality, by region, by state (and nationally).

With respect to coastal management, based on the evidence presented, there is no such facility for this collection to take place. For environmental planning and management in NSW generally, DUAP has identified greater community consultation as a key facet of its Plan First program (NSW Government 2000). Thus, the NSW Government has provided the rhetoric for greater public involvement in the development of key environmental and planning policies such as LEPs, REPs and SPPs. There are, however, some ominous signs within many communities that exhaustion is setting in, optimism and commitment are being replaced by cynicism because of a lack of agency co-ordination in the area on community consultation, education, feedback and; because people aren't being listened to – there is no feedback loop to link community considerations into the decision-making process (Eberhardt, in NSWCPAR 1999-2000). Hopefully this thesis can provide assistance with the substantive development of a framework to redress these information gaps and enable better coastal management in NSW.

5.6 Conclusion

“The major threats to coastal landscape and lifestyle values are perceived to be poor planning, providing for the future urban growth, lack of development control, over-development, pollution, agricultural viability, habitat destruction, over-population, infrastructure provision, and government inaction. The public recognise that responsibility for these issues rests with all stakeholders and importantly, are prepared to do more themselves if they can be assured that other stakeholders (notably government agencies) act as well” (Dutton et al 1997).

The goal at the start of this Thesis was to progress the discussion of public participation in CZM programs and policies and to establish whether a framework could be developed that would allow the community's / public's role in the decision-making process to be monitored and evaluated. It is not the goal of this chapter to provide a prescription for public participation because participation programs need to be considered in the context of each program or policy or development.

This Chapter proposes a structure for what many decision-makers label as soft data - information that is often hard to collect and quantify and because of these restrictions, can therefore be difficult to write into policy. The key goal of the Chapter was to provide a framework of understanding or a *common language* for public participation. This is the foundation stone for a broader framework that is consistent with and will enhance the quality of the decision-making process for CZM. The relative stability of the key issues for coastal management, however, may help coastal managers and decision-makers to focus on key planning issues and better allocate stretched resources with some confidence that government objectives and community needs will be met (after Channell 1996b).

Australian Governments, at the Local, State and Federal and Industry have made numerous incursions into the design and delivery of public participation programs in recent years, but

there is a substantive lack of evidence to show that this has helped to prevent environmental degradation or public tension, despite the coast's pride of place as Australia's national icon. One of the key constraints to developing greater public participation (Stein 1998) has been the numerous government efforts at watering down the thrust of the EP & A Act (1979).

Without a legitimate and meaningful role in integrated planning and management for the coastal zone, the public / community will remain on the fringe of decision-making, consultation processes are unlikely to be successful and as a result, the planning and legislative framework will continue to be burdened with economic, social and political claims for redress.

Chapter 6:

Conclusion

The aim of this Thesis was to review the history and practice of coastal management and make a series of recommendations to improve CZM in NSW. My personal experience in this area has been that there are a number of key issues/barriers preventing effective management and decision-making. The relative stability of many of the environmental *issues* related to CZM over the past one to two decades indicated to me that there were not only resource-related issues, but also organisational and institutional issues affecting coastal management.

In Chapter One, I provided an historical study of coastal management. The review initially took on a broad framework and gradually developed a key focus on NSW. People have been living on the coast for many thousands of years. The coastal environment is endowed with an abundance of natural resources, providing people with access to resources for living. As well as this, coastal climates have generally been milder than those further inland and thus more suitable for human occupation. Over time, two important changes have taken place: firstly, population growth in the coastal zone has led to increased competition for resources; and secondly, the increased population levels have affected the quality of the resources available. Water quality and loss of habitat are serious marine and coastal environmental issues in NSW.

Management of coastal resources has developed towards a more integrated approach and today has at its core, the principles of ESD. Integrated CZM can be broadly defined as a process of governance that consists of the legal and institutional framework necessary to ensure that development and management plans for coastal zones are integrated with environmental and social goals, and are developed with the participation of those affected (Post and Lundin 1996).

In NSW, there are a number of hindrances to effective and sustainable coastal management. Defining coastal management, however, does not provide any indication of how coastal management is practiced. In this regard, my review produced a number of significant findings. Key issues were identified as being: population growth; environment and sustainability; management and decision-making; public participation; and access. There is a general concurrence between these issues and the major triggers necessary for reform of coastal management. These are: global environmental change; ESD; integrated management; and greater community awareness of management issues and participation in decision-making (Thom and Harvey 2001).

Community involvement and public participation in decision-making, as well as being a central issue for reform and improvement of CZM, has been a major recommendation from practically every significant report and inquiry into CZM over the past 30 years (see Table 1.8). In order to develop a greater understanding of the basis and opportunities for public

participation in decision-making, I conducted a review of the current policy, legislative and reporting framework for coastal management in NSW. Community involvement/public participation is a key indicator for successful CZM programs. Despite this significance, there is documented evidence of the failure of government to fully understand this issue and the result is that public participation in CZM decision-making remains a peripheral policy and an administrative issue at the local, state and federal level.

In order to develop a greater understanding of the basis and opportunities for public participation in decision-making, I reviewed current policy, and the legislative and reporting framework for coastal management in NSW (Chapter Two). This demonstrates that the current planning and management system in New South Wales is not adequately equipped with a system that can monitor and evaluate public involvement/participation in the development and review of coastal management policies and programs. The current system, although it is gradually responding to change expectations, is off track and there is a grave danger that a cynical and badly consulted public will lose interest in the management and protection of this precious resource.

A number of key issues need to be stressed here. Chapter Two identified a significant disparity between the policy rhetoric of government and the actual framework and practice. The major planning act, the EP&A Act (1979) specifically encourages public participation in environmental management and decision-making, yet as was pointed out by Justice Stein (1998), of the Land and Environment Court, a developmental mentality exists within government and this has come at the expense of the general public's right to participate, and principles of accountability for environmental planning and resource management. Stein argues that planning laws have been watered down and massaged by government to a large degree. Connor (2002) has described this traditional approach to decision-making as the 'decide', 'announce' and 'defend' (DAD) model. He argues that it needs to be replaced with a more positive model. A course of action he suggests is that DAD be replaced with PEP which he defines as:

- **Profile** the community or region so you know the people you need to work with;
- **Educate** them about the issues and alternatives already identified; and
- **Participate** with them in a process of mutual education and joint problem solving.

I reviewed the EIA process and found that as a means of involving the public in the decision-making process, it had a number of shortcomings. The DAD approach is ingrained in EIA, prevents early public involvement and does not encourage an independent review of proposals.

Resourcing of programs is a major issue for CZM in NSW. The NSW Coastal Policy (1997) attempts to co-ordinate the collection of a range of data to improve CZM, however, an analysis of the information presented in Chapters One and Two, has led me to the conclusion that CZM in NSW is primarily a top-down delivery program without adequate systems in place to effectively incorporate bottom-up information into the decision-making process. The NSW

Coastal Council does not have the resources (personnel or time) to investigate public participation in more detail.

The problem is not that the NSW Coastal Policy is lacking in information about public participation and community involvement in policy and program review decision-making for CZM, it is that there is a need to develop systems for monitoring and evaluating public participation and community consultation because it is such an important component of CZM. As this discussion points out, this information is not being collected and evaluated at a level of government where it can be used to inform and drive CZM.

This highlights another important issue that is related to data collection. As Chapter Two, described, SoERs are the major vehicle by which public participation could be monitored and evaluated, yet the range of indicators for this type of analysis are not well defined and reporting is generally sporadic. Further to this, there are no comprehensive databases in which to collate and store this type of knowledge/information so that it can be accessed as part of the decision-making process.

Reforms to the current planning system are currently underway and increased public participation and community consultation are a major component of the reform process. Chapter Two provides a summary critique of the proposed reforms and Chapter Three supports this evaluation by providing a detailed discussion of the fundamental principles of public participation. Based on my review of Plan First, I am not confident that the proposed reforms will significantly alter the practice of coastal management, nor are they likely to provide any real opportunities for further public/community involvement in the decision-making process.

In Chapter Three, I described the important elements of public participation. The benefits of successful public participation programs are widely acknowledged and based on an extensive review, it is my opinion that greater and more effective public participation and community consultation involvement will deliver better management decisions. I developed a common set of criteria for public participation that is based on a series of considerations prevalent in much of the literature. Central to any public participation program is the philosophical dimension within which it operates. No matter how ingenious, representative or well developed a consultation or participation program is, it will not be completely successful unless there is concomitant political will. Chapter Two described some of the hindrances these programs are facing in NSW. On a practical level, Arnstein (1969) was the first author to describe the various levels of participation the public could have in the decision framework. While this process is useful, it does not provide any real strategic direction. A more appropriate model today would be the adoption of a set of criteria that were developed by Renn *et al* (1995) and Connor (2002) which evaluate not only the decision-making framework, but program and program criteria objectives as well. I provided a summary table of common evaluative criteria in Table 5.3

I have proposed a series of recommendations a strategy to develop, integrate, monitor and evaluate public participation programs. A different paradigm for public participation is necessary if there is to be an advance in the discussion and practice of public participation programs. The development of better planned programs and policies, including further training for managers and decision-makers is critical to the successful implementation of programs. Lastly, programs need to be monitored and evaluated. One of the key drivers for CZM today is the need for it to operate within an integrated management process that, through deliberate and continuous monitoring, allows policies and programs to be adapted and modified, as the need requires.

The two case studies presented in Chapter Four have enabled me to critically examine real examples of public participation. The Kempsey Shire study provided an opportunity to test the model that is presented in Chapter 5. The case studies approach community involvement in coastal management from different perspectives: the Kempsey Shire study focuses on the role that the local community had through the development, release and subsequent withdrawal of an aquaculture DA for the area. The Byron Shire study focuses on a particular issue, coastal erosion at Belongil beach, and through this, I examine community involvement in the development of Council's Coastline Management Strategy.

Both of the studies examine issues that are less tangible, but equally as important as scientific indicators in the decision-making process. They highlight many of the contemporary issues for CZM in NSW today. Public participation is a vast and often unpredictable art and there are many factors that affect participation in CZM. The case studies examined core issues including legislative failure, representation (who is the public), and the process of involvement/participation (See Table 5.11). The studies confirm the existence of a set of key issues for CZM as well the major institutional hindrances to effective CZM.

Public participation programs must be built around the 'process' of involvement. This is often more important than 'outcomes', as program goals can become outdated or obsolete very quickly (Bass *et al* 1995). In the Kempsey Shire study, the Proponent failed to conduct a successful consultation campaign (by any standards), whereas in the Byron Shire study, Council's desire to involve the community has bottlenecked the process of developing the Coastline Management Plan. The adoption of more innovative techniques for consultation and participation might help to progress some of the key issues at stake. The issues raised in the case studies are comparable to those listed in Table 1.9, which provides a comprehensive review of the key organisational process and resource outcome issues for CZM in NSW.

Based on our collective experience, there really is no reason why CZM planning, policy and implementation should not be more integrated and fundamentally improved. The issues faced in Byron and Kempsey Shire are not new, nor are they unique, and they provide concrete evidence of the stagnant institutional approach to natural resource management in general and coastal management specifically. This is symptomatic of the business of development in NSW.

"Without a change in governance and in administrative structures (including a limited role for the Commonwealth), the future of coastal management will not differ much from that of the past" (Thom and Harvey 2001).

Reform of coastal management cannot occur without whole of government institutional change, a process that typically takes a minimum of five to seven years (Cullen 1987). There are however, many smaller changes that can take place during this time that are compatible with the much shorter, but infinitely more powerfully driven electoral and political cycle. The rapid degradation of resources in the coastal zone requires no less than this.

In Chapter 5, I developed a broad-based set of criteria for monitoring and evaluating public participation and community consultation in the decision-making process. These criteria have been developed from my research as well as the knowledge and experience of other authors. Because of the adaptive nature of CZM, such a model cannot be prescriptive, yet the criteria for evaluation can be standardised. This means that a series of indicators for public participation can be developed and programs and policies can be evaluated.

In this respect, the key goal of the chapter was to contribute to the development of a *common language* that can be used to describe public participation. This is the foundation stone for a broader framework that is consistent with and will enhance the quality of the decision-making process for CZM.

Dovers (2001) argues that *long term monitoring of environmental change in Australia is poor and patchy, and monitoring of the impact and adequacy of policy and management interventions is particularly sparse*. It was my intention in this thesis to examine all aspects of public/community involvement in decision-making in CZM in NSW. Change needs to come simultaneously from a number of directions. Greater and more effective public participation and community consultation is a key trigger for CZM reform. The design and implementation of monitoring and evaluation tools, not just for public participation, but for the practice of government generally is made all the more critical because of the currently poor institutional framework for managing natural resources in Australia.

The goal of this thesis was to present a case arguing for the development of a model that monitors and evaluates public participation in coastal planning and management policies and programs and that could be embodied in the New South Wales Coastal Policy as a tool that can be used by individuals, community groups and government to contribute to better coastal management. The model or framework developed in Chapter 5 should allow the community's/public's role in the decision-making process to be monitored and evaluated. I believe it will be a useful one.

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Appendix 1:

Survey Participant Information Form

Participant information form

Hello, we are students from Macquarie University and we are doing a survey of people in several places around Byron Bay. We would like to ask you some questions about the area and your relationship to it. Could you spare 10 or 15 minutes of your time please?

Confidentiality:

Only summaries of information will be made public. Individual information will not be identified with particular persons even to the researchers.

For your information:

The ethical aspects of this study have been approved by the Macquarie University Ethics Review Committee (Human Research). If you have any complaints or reservations about any ethical aspect of your participation in this research, you may contact the Committee through its secretary (telephone [02] 9850 7854). Any complaint you make will be treated in confidence and investigated, and you will be informed of the outcome.

Appendix 2:

Byron Shire Survey

Byron Bay Survey

Have you already been interviewed today/this week?

Q1. Which of the following best describes your situation?

Permanent resident		How long?	<div></div>
Resident for part of the week			
Visitor			

Q2. What do you like most about the Byron Bay area?

	5 (like most)	4	3	2	1 (like least)
Peace & quiet					
Recreational features / activities					
Nature and the surroundings / scenery					
Clean air					
Clean water					
Climate					
Non-urban lifestyle					
Community/friendly people					
National Park					
Lifestyle					
Spiritual nature					
Beaches + swimming					
Access to good surfing waves					
Access to good dive sites					

Q3. Do you think there are any activities taking place in Byron Bay that affect the environment negatively?

Activities	Very serious 3	Serious 2	Not serious 1

Q4. Can you tell us which of the following issues are important to you in Byron Bay?

Issue	Very important 5	Important 4	Neutral 3	Not important 2	Don't know 1
Improve boating facilities					
Rubbish on foreshores					
Conserve native plants and animals					
Population growth					
More jobs					
Improve services for local residents					
Improve services for tourists					
More open space					
Car bodies placed on the foreshore for beach protection					
Rocks/boulders placed on the foreshore for beach protection					

Comments

Q5. Do you think there should further development in Byron Bay?

Yes () No () Not sure ()

Q5a. If yes, which of the following would you favour?

Housing	<input type="checkbox"/>	Industry/business	<input type="checkbox"/>
Marinas	<input type="checkbox"/>	Tourist/visitor centre	<input type="checkbox"/>
Beach protection measures	<input type="checkbox"/>	Local government info centre	<input type="checkbox"/>
Other (please give details)			

Q6. Do you think there should be expansion of tourism in Byron Bay?

Yes ()

No ()

Q6a. If yes, which of the following would you favour?

Hotels	<input type="checkbox"/>	Holiday resorts	<input type="checkbox"/>
Ecotourism	<input type="checkbox"/>	Camping/caravan parks	<input type="checkbox"/>
Conferences	<input type="checkbox"/>	Health / Spiritual retreats	<input type="checkbox"/>

Comments

Q7. Over the next ten years, what are the TWO things you would least like to see in the Byron Bay area?

1.

2.

Q8. Over the next ten years, what TWO things would you like most to see in the Byron Bay area?

1.

2.

Q9. Do you think there is significant community awareness of how natural features are managed in Byron Bay?

Yes () No () Not sure () Don't know ()

Q10. Do you think the local community should be involved in the management of Byron Bay?

Yes () No () Not sure () Don't know ()

Q10a. If yes, how should they be involved?

Q11. This question relates to Agencies and groups who have a role in the management of the Byron Bay area. Can you rank these agencies/groups from 1-12 with respect to their responsibility for management of the Byron Bay area (with 1 being the most important and 12 the least important).

Byron Shire Council

State Forests

Federal Government

NSW Fisheries

Env. Protection Authority

Waterways Authority

☐

National Parks and Wildlife

☐

Dept. of Land and Water Conservation

☐

Aboriginal Groups

☐

Dept. of Defence

☐

Tourism Board

☐

Coastal Council

☐☐☐☐☐☐

Q12. If you were interested in further information on Byron Bay, where do you think you would go?

Q13. Do you think the area could benefit from any changes in the way it is managed, for example:

	Y	N
More Co-ordination between existing government agencies		
A new single regional agency		
More community management and less control by government agencies		
It's fine, no change		

Comments

Q14. What are the main recreational activities you pursue in the Byron Bay area and how often?

Activity	more than once per week 5	once per week 4	Once / twice per month 3	< once / twice per month 2	Holiday Periods 1
Bushwalking/walking					
Sight seeing					
4Wd/trailbike					
Fishing					
Surfing/swimming					
Power boating					
Sailing/canoeing					
Golf					
Other (specify)					

Q15. What type of access do you have to the beaches in Byron Bay? (please tick)

- ☐ Unrestricted
- ☐ Public access restricted in part only (give details)
- ☐ Access closed to the public (give details)

Q15a. If there are any beaches in Byron Bay where access is restricted, do you know who has imposed the restrictions?

Yes () No () Not sure () Don't know ()

If yes, please provide details

Q16. Has there been any change in beach condition in recent years?

Yes () No () Not sure () Don't know ()

Q16a. If yes, what sort of changes have you noticed?

Q16b. If yes to 16a above, to the best of your knowledge has anyone attempted to modify the condition of the beach?

Yes () No () Not sure () Don't know ()

If yes, please provide details.

Q17. To the best of your knowledge, are there any current developments or development proposals affecting any of the beaches in Byron Bay?

Yes () No () Not sure () Don't know ()

If yes, please provide details.

Q18. Are you aware of any problems that have been caused by engineering works designed to protect the coastline in Byron Bay?

Yes () No () Not sure () Don't know ()

If yes, please provide details.

Q19. This is a hypothetical question. *If you were a local resident whose property adjoined the beach and your property was potentially under threat because of beach erosion on a public beach, what would you do?*

Q20. Do you think Byron Shire Council has a right to prohibit land owners from protecting their property from immediate danger due to beach erosion if it means that in the long term the beach will be degraded? Please explain.

Q21. Which age group do you belong to?

- 16-25 () 41-60 ()
26-40 () Over 60 ()

Q22.

- Male () Female ()

Q23. Are you:

- Employed () How? _____
Unemployed ()
Retired ()
Other ()

Thank you very much for your participation! ☺

Appendix 3:

Letters, Submissions and Newspaper Articles examined for the Kempsey Shire Case Study

Community and NGO

- Chris Dockrill, resident
- Chris Gee (Coast Arc P/L Architects / Designers)
- Crescent Head Ratepayers and Residents Association
- FJ Andrews, Wallum Cottages, resident and businessman
- John Jeayes, resident
- Kendall & Kendall Ecological Services P/L, Kempsey
- Kevin Pugh, resident
- Linda Valk, resident
- Nat Young, (former) World Surfing Champion
- Ocean Watch Australia Ltd
- Phil Heaton, resident
- Roger Ferguson, resident
- Surfrider Foundation Australia
- Trial Bay Sportfishing Club inc.

Council and Government Agencies

- Andrew Stoner MP - letter to The Hon Andrew Refshauge, Minister for Urban Affairs and Planning, 3 April 2001.
- Ian Cohen MLC - questions asked in Parliament to the Minister for Urban Affairs and Planning, 5 April 2001.
- DUAP - letter from Jo Haggerty to Howard Kerr (Proponent), 19 April 2001.
- NPWS - letter from Brendan Diacono, Manager, Conservation Planning Unit to Yolande Stone, Manager - Environmental Policy and Strategic Assessment, 13 December 2000.
- DUAP - letter from Geoff Noonan, Director Development and Infrastructure to Roger Ferguson, 3 May 2001.
- NSW Premier's Department - letter from Col Gellatly, Director General to Roger Ferguson.
- NPWS - letter from Brendan Diacono, Manager, Conservation Planning Unit to G Kirkby, Team Leader, Manufacturing and Rural Industries (DUAP), 26 April 2001.
- NPWS - letter from Michael Wright, Director, Policy and Science to Linda Valk, May 2001.
- DUAP - letter from Geoff Noonan, Director, Development and Infrastructure Assessment to Linda Valk, 5 June 2001.
- DUAP - letter from Jo Haggerty, Development and Infrastructure Assessment to Linda Valk.
- Kempsey Shire Council - letter from R. Pitt, Development Control Officer, Environmental Services Department, to Roger Ferguson, 23 April 2001.

Newspaper Articles

- A announcement Macleay Argus, 23 March 2001.
- Sue Paterick - Macleay Argus, April 10, "Support for Fish Hatchery, but Council has its concerns".
- Macleay Argus, April 9, "Support removed from Hatchery".
- Phillippa Murray Newcastle Morning Herald, 10 March 2001 "Councils need to let sleeping coasts lie".

Other

- South West Rocks Aquaculture Ltd. - Statement of Environmental Effects, Hatchery, Growout, Processing, Stage 1. February 2001
- NPWS - Goolawah Reserve Plan of Management 1987.
- Petition in opposition to the Development.
- Save Racecourse Flyer
- NSW Government 2000 North Coast Aquaculture Strategy.
- S.O.R.E. Newsletters 1-3 (April - June 2001).

Appendix 4:

List of Acronyms

List of Acronyms

ANAO	Australian National Audit Office
ANZECC	Australian and New Zealand Environment Conservation Council
BSC	Byron Shire Council
CHRRRA	Crescent Head Residents and Ratepayers Association
CPA	NSW Coastal Protection Act 1979
CZM	Coastal Zone Management
CZMA	United States Coastal Zone Management Act
DA	Development Application
DAD	Decide Announce Defend
DCP	Development Control Plan
DEST	Commonwealth Department of Environment Sport and Territories
DETR	Department of Transport (United Kingdom)
DLG	Department of Local Government (NSW)
DLWC	Department of Land and Water Conservation (NSW)
DUAP	Department of Urban Affairs and Planning (now known as Planning NSW)
EDO	Environmental Defenders Office
EIA	Environmental Impact Assessment
EIS	Environmental Impact Statement
EP&A Act	Environmental Planning and Assessment Act (1979) (NSW)
EPA	Environment Protection Authority (NSW)
EPI	Environmental Planning Instrument
ESD	Ecologically Sustainable Development
GEO	Global Environment Outlook (United Nations)
HORSCEC	House of Representatives Standing Committee on Environment and Conservation
HORSCERA	House of Representatives Standing Committee on Environment Recreation and the Arts
IAP2	International Association for Public Participation
ICM	Integrated Coastal Management
ICWG	Integrated Coastal Working Group
ICZM	Integrated Coastal Zone Management
INRM	Integrated Natural Resource Management
LEP	Local Environment Plan (NSW)
LES	Local Environment Study (NSW)
MoU	Memorandum of Understanding
NGO	Non Government Organisation
NPWS	National Parks and Wildlife Service (NSW)
NRM	Natural Resource Management
NSESD	National Strategy for Ecologically Sustainable Development
NSW	New South Wales
OECD	Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development

PEP	Profile Educate Participate
PoM	Plan of Management
PP	Public Participation
PPS	Public Participation Strategies
RAC	Resource Assessment Commission (1993)
REP	Regional Environmental Plan
RPDC	Resource Planning and Development Commission
SEPP	State Environmental Planning Policy (NSW)
SES	State Emergency Services
SoE	State of the Environment
SOEE	Statement of Environmental Effects
SoER	State of the Environment Report
SOMER	State of the Marine Environment Report
SORE	Save Our Racecourse Environment
SPP	State Planning Policy
SRCMS	Sydney Regional Coastal Management Strategy
SWRAL	South West Rocks Aquaculture Limited
TCM	Total Catchment Management
UNEP	United Nations Environment Program
USA	United States of America
WWF	World wide Fund for Nature