



# COVIDSafe Consultation – A Safety Leadership Approach

July 2021





Ai Group offers a range of multidisciplinary Work Health Safety Consulting Services.

Contact us to discuss how we can help to make your business a safe workplace.



Contact the Workplace Advice Line on 1300 55 66 77 or [workplaceadvice@aigroup.com.au](mailto:workplaceadvice@aigroup.com.au) for further advice.

Stay up-to-date with the latest advice and resources on our dedicated COVID-19 web-page at the [COVID-19 advice and resources for members page](#)

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## Help stop the spread of COVID-19:

- Check in everywhere, every time - all businesses and workplaces that remain open are required to use the [Victorian Government QR Code Service](#), unless an exemption applies.
- Stay up to date with the [latest exposure sites](#)
- Get tested if you are ill - anyone with COVID-19 [symptoms](#) should [get tested](#) immediately.
- Support workers to get vaccinated - appointments can be booked [here](#).
- Update your COVIDSafe Plan - every business with on-site operations must have a [COVIDSafe Plan](#). It's your list of safety actions.

For more information go to [coronavirus.vic.gov.au](https://coronavirus.vic.gov.au)

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# Outline

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What is Consultation?

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When are employers legally required to consult?

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How, When and Why and Who to Consult

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Better and Safer decision making and outcomes

# What is Consultation?

Employees are  
given sufficient  
information for  
them to have input

Their views are  
genuinely  
considered

Consultation ≠  
agreement

# Good Workplace Consultation:

## Provide necessary information

- What the change is – provide specifics ( power points/charts/plans etc)
- Why it is necessary
- What the employer wants to achieve
- What the employer expects from employees
- Impact on employees

## Give employees sufficient time to digest the information and provide a response

- This may mean more than one meeting to explain the changes and impacts

# Good Workplace Consultation:

## Genuinely consider their responses

- Take the time to work out if their suggestions can achieve the same outcomes

## Communicating the final decision

- Set another meeting



# When are employers legally required to consult?

Part Two



# Requirement to consult

Employers are  
required to  
consult

- identifying hazards and assessing risks arising from the work carried out or to be carried out;
- making decisions about ways to eliminate or minimise those risks;
- making decisions about the adequacy of facilities for the welfare of workers;
- proposing changes that may affect the health or safety or your workers

# Requirement to consult

Employers are  
required to  
consult

- making decisions about procedures for:
  - consulting with workers
  - resolving health or safety issues
  - monitoring the conditions at the workplace
  - providing information and training for workers.

# Why consult about major change?

## Promotes

- Workplace culture
- Better decision making
- Acceptance/compliance with change

## Avoids

- Bad employee morale
- Drop in productivity
- Unnecessary incidents/prosecutions



# What are some of the Barriers to Consultation in your workplace?

Discussion

# Common barriers and responses

## Tokenism (perceived or actual)

- Provide genuine opportunity to respond
- Communicate outcome of consultation

## Poor management skills

- Train and support managers to communicate and consult effectively
- Develop consultation policy with clear objectives and procedures

## Inappropriate communication methods

- Be mindful of language and literacy issues
- Use variety of communication and consultation methods



### Inadequate provision of information

- Provide all information necessary to enable genuine consultation
- Provide easy access to information during consultation period

### Timing

- Plan ahead and give as much notice of meetings as possible
- Use alternative consultation methods to capture absent, casual and part-time workers

### Confidentiality concerns

- Make a clear statement that victimisation is not tolerated
- Consider ways for workers to confidentially provide their views

# Common barriers and responses



### Physical barriers

- Minimise distractions by using suitable space for meetings
- Plan ahead and consider alternatives to ensure inclusion of whole workforce or work group

### Systematic barriers

- Ensure roles and responsibilities for consultation are clear
- Ensure effective communication channels

### Union involvement

- Don't leave consultation with your workforce to the Union(s)
- Comply with legal obligations to consult and document all steps taken

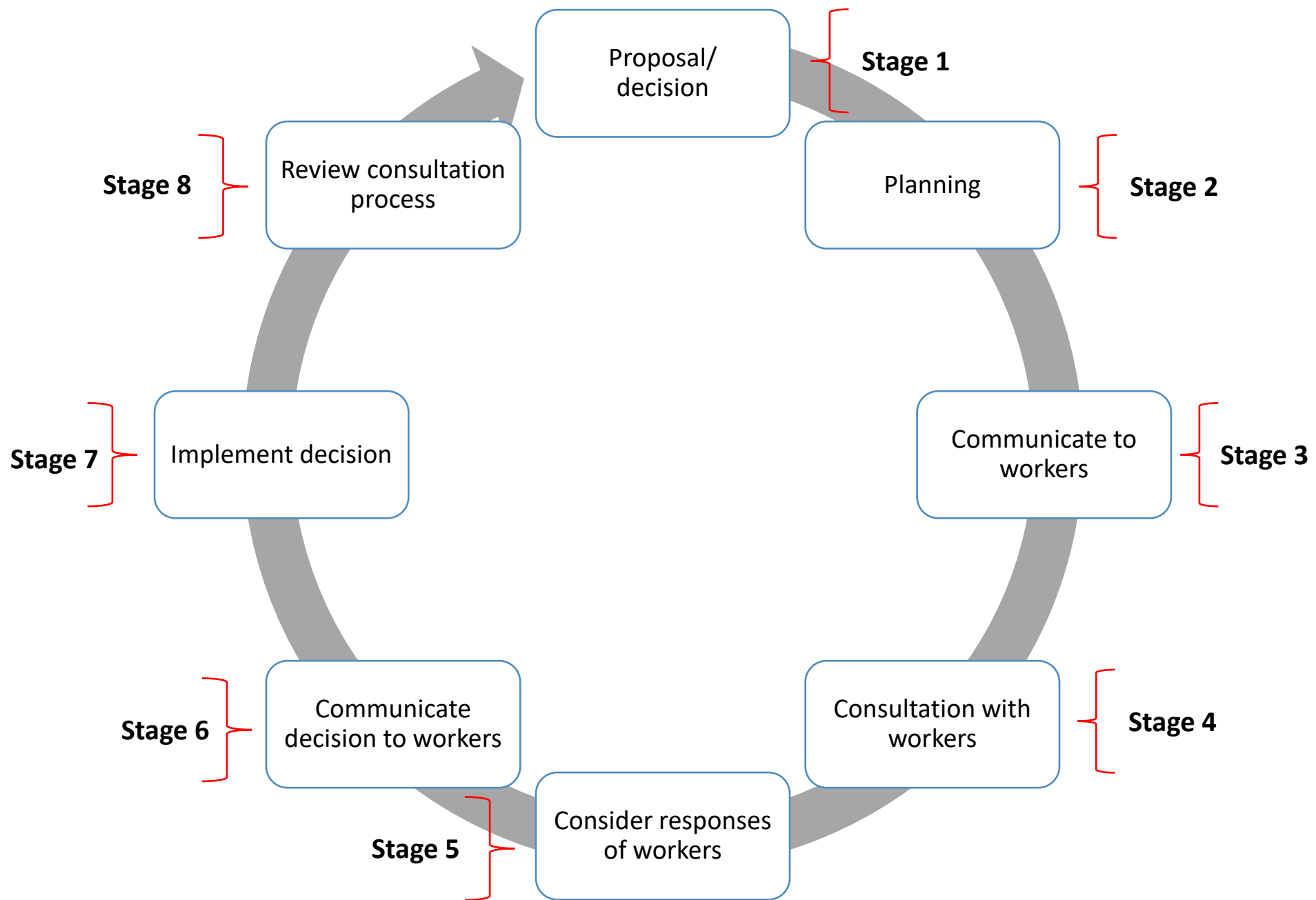
# Common barriers and responses

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# Develop a COVIDSafe plan

Activity





# In Summary

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Focus on the outcome you want to achieve

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Articulate your desired outcome with enough detail so your workers understand the business objective

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Be clear and transparent – provide all necessary information

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Be open to suggestions from workers on how to achieve the desired outcome

# In Summary

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Encourage and invite feedback

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Give real consideration – if their suggestions achieve the same objective, why would you not implement them?

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Communicate your decision and reasons

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Consultation is a process – it takes time and trust



Questions?

# Resources

- Consultation: A guide for Victorian workplaces – Worksafe Victoria
- This guide provides information on:
  - what matters employers must consult about
  - who needs to be consulted
  - what consultation involves
  - different ways that consultation can occur
  - developing consultation procedures
- <https://www.worksafe.vic.gov.au/resources/consultation-guide-victorian-workplaces>





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