



Australian Government
Attorney-General's Department

DINGO CREEK



Activity Title **Make them listen!**

Theme

Effective communications ensures participation from the community in all important enterprises, particularly in the Emergency Risk management (ERM) process.

Key Learning / Subject Areas

- Personal Development
- Health and Physical Education
- Science
- Technology
- Studies of Society and the Environment
- English/Literacy
- Personal Learning

Possible Year Levels **Year 5 - 7**

Duration **Up to 5 periods, depending on complexity of Communications Product.**

Objectives

On completion of this activity students will be able to:

- understand the key elements of a communications plan;
- identify "champions" and influencers within the local community;
- understand the importance of communication and consultation to the ERM process.

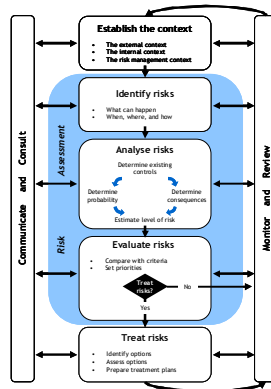
The output will be a basic communications plan and a communications product.

Introduction

Communities are complex: they can be a group of people linked together by a shared location, experience, interest or function and people can belong to more than one group. This means that a broad cross-section of stakeholder views should be represented in the ERM process. Their understandings of risk and benefits, together with underlying reasoning, should be identified and documented, so that an unbiased and holistic view is achieved.

The focus of this activity is to help students develop an understanding of how to best develop communication to target a particular group – and to get the message out there most effectively.

Because emergency risk management deals with events which do not happen very often, communication and consultation are essential components within the *Emergency Risk Management (ERM)* process. Handout 1 includes a larger scale diagram of the ERM process.



Effective communication and consultation help to:

- improve people's understanding of risks and the emergency risk management process
- ensure that the varied views of stakeholders are considered
- ensure that all participants are aware of their roles and responsibilities.

Therefore, a communication plan needs to be developed at the start of the ERM process to ensure effective representation from the community. It also helps to encourage commitment, participation and ownership of the process to help manage risks.

In this activity, students are encouraged to develop a communication plan and a communications product focused on a hazard or risk to their local community: school, street, town, suburb.

Prior Learning

- Students need to have a basic understanding of the ERM process (and can achieve this through undertaking the Dingo Creek learning object as well as finding out more by clicking on the ERM button for more information)

Activity Description

Step 1 – Whole class activity
The questions we need to ask

Begin by brainstorming the following wonderings with the class. Answering these questions can help ensure good communication is achieved.

(If new vocabulary appears, students can start to create an ERM vocabulary wall and can use resources such as the Emergency Management in Australia website and the Glossary in the Dingo Creek learning object to help them in finding out definitions for difficult words such as *champions, stakeholders, focus groups, hazards* etc.)

Some questions might include:

- What do you think are the potential hazards to the community?
- How could you encourage members of your community to be better prepared?
- What would you want to say and how would you say it?
- What are the major issues to the community?

- What do people care about most?
- Who are the major focus groups in the community?
- Who are the Champions within the community?
- How can information be communicated to external and external stakeholders?
- What kinds of information should be distributed?
- How can information be presented in a simple, clear and non-technical way?
- Do different groups of people need different types of information?
- How can people be encouraged to find out more information?
- How can the local media be used to communicate key messages?

Step 2 – Pair activity

Developing your plan and your product

In pairs, students will be required to work together to undertake a commission work to develop a Communications Plan and Communications Product that focuses on minimising risks to their local community. The class should be alerted that they have a finite period of time in which to develop both the plan and the product.

They need to:

1. Identify the community to which the plan will be pitched: is it their class? School? Street? Town? Suburb?
2. Create a list of key stakeholders in that community: who are the people or groups that have an investment, share, or interest in this community?
3. Consult with some of these stakeholders by interviewing them (see Activity 3, *Go to the Source*) to find out:
 - Their major concerns
 - The risks they think are facing the community
 - How they think the community is currently prepared
 - How the community needs to become better prepared
 - The best ways of communicating with the community as a whole
4. Through these interviews, the students should have a clearer idea of who the community leaders/champions are and the best options available to them to communicate a key message to the community.
5. The pair then needs to document their plan, covering:
 - The key message: what do they want to communicate? (Such as *Being better prepared*, *Ways of saving your pets*, *How to get involved as a volunteer* etc)
 - Who the target audience will be
 - What the communications strategies will be (and why)
 - A timeline for the Plan
 - The best types of Communications Products for this target audience. Some examples include:
 - A poster
 - A pamphlet
 - An advertisement for radio or TV
 - A newspaper advertorial
 - Media Release
 - A bumper sticker
 - A mouse pad
 - A screen saver
 - A website
6. Once the pair have agreed on their Communications Plan, they need to develop a Communications Product through which they will convey that message.

Step 3 – Whole Class activity

Once the students have completed their Communications Product, they can post these around the classroom or on the school intranet for peer review. The students could be encouraged to present their product to one or more of their community stakeholders for their feedback on its effectiveness in communicating its message.

Teacher Notes

Improved communication and consultation are skills that emerge from this activity as students develop an understanding of the important elements of effectively conveying messages to target audiences. The students will need to organise their time carefully and make decisions quickly. They will need to translate technical language into plain language and will need to give practical advice to engage members of the community. The types of products developed will depend on the class access to computers and student computer skills.

Resources / Links / Materials Required

- *ERM Process* handout
- Access to computers for developing any digital Communication Products (if required).

Handout 1

Emergency Risk Management Process Diagram

