



Latrobe Valley Asbestos Taskforce




Multi-stakeholder Partnership Analysis

May 2022



Prepared by
Liz Meggetto Consulting



Acknowledgments

We acknowledge the Traditional Owners of the land, the Gunaikurnai people, and their continuing connection to land, waters and community. We pay our respects to them and their cultures, and to Elders both past and present.

MULTI-STAKEHOLDER PARTNERSHIP ANALYSIS

Prepared for : Latrobe Valley Asbestos Taskforce

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Prepared by : Liz Meggetto Consulting
lizmeggettoconsulting@gmail.com

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Executive Summary



BACKGROUND

The Latrobe Valley Asbestos Taskforce (the Taskforce) was formally commissioned in February 2019. The Taskforce is a regional asbestos forum, established to undertake a review into how asbestos is managed in the Latrobe Valley, including the safe identification, handling and disposal of asbestos across industrial, commercial and residential sites and locations.

AIM OF THIS REPORT

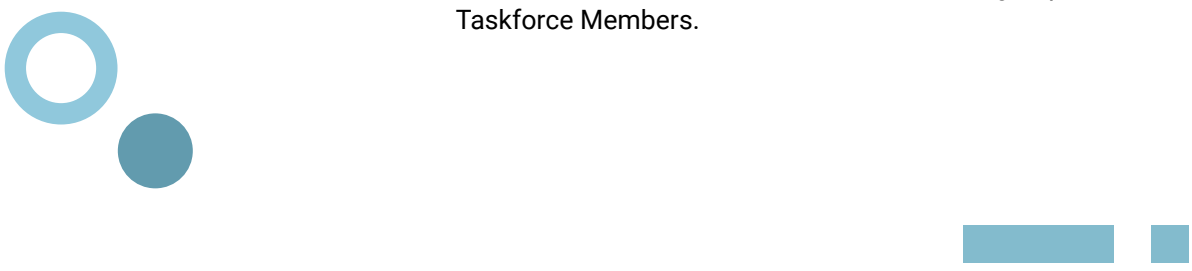
The Latrobe Valley Asbestos Taskforce Multi-stakeholder Partnership Analysis was undertaken to understand how the members of the Taskforce work in partnership. The aim is to understand the operating model of the Taskforce and whether the Taskforce has met/is meeting the objectives in the Strategic Plan. The analysis also aims to identify the strengths of the Taskforce and opportunities for improvement to continue to strengthen the Taskforce operating model.

METHOD

An independent consultant was engaged to undertake a Multi-stakeholder Partnership Analysis and produce a report outlining the findings, including recommendations to ensure strong collaboration between the members into the future.

The Taskforce multi-stakeholder partnership analysis was conducted over the period February to April 2022.

Data included a comprehensive document review to understand the operating model, development of a survey to gather information about the members' experiences of participating in the Taskforce and two reflective focus groups with the Taskforce Members.





RESULTS

The Taskforce operating model was presented, showing the strength of the working group structure to deliver on the actions of the strategic plan.

The Taskforce was determined to be successfully progressing toward its strategic focus areas and noted the progress that had been made over the past four years.

The strengths of the Taskforce were investigated through 27 measures. 17 measures had a weighted average score ≥ 4 showing strong partnership approaches of the Taskforce. Six measures had a weighted average score of 3.51-3.99, showing areas that were working well but could be improved upon and only two measures had a weighted average score ≤ 3.50 .

Members discussed opportunities for improvement into the future to continue to strengthen the Taskforce operating model.

Members remain committed to the Taskforce and are invested in the collaborative development of the next phase.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Seven recommendations are presented to continue to strengthen the Taskforce operating model.

- 1 Continue to utilise the strengths of the Taskforce and build on the member expertise and experience to further progress the work of the Taskforce, bringing in new expertise as needed.
- 2 Undertake an evolutionary Taskforce planning session to co-develop the next iteration of the model including consideration of a place based, regional and/or state-wide approach.
- 3 When developing the next phase of the Taskforce, spend concentrated time on discussing the differences in organisational priorities, goals and expectations that may influence the functioning of the Taskforce and determine ways to address these from the outset.
- 4 Explore opportunities to embed the aim of the Taskforce into member organisations' strategic directive to enhance integration of the work.
- 5 Continue to undertake collaborative reviews of the strategic plan and focus areas based on the knowledge and experiences of the members to ensure it is achievable and reflective of the current issues in the Latrobe Valley.
- 6 Regularly develop easy-to-read short summary documents outlining the progress of the Taskforce and distribute to members for circulation within their organisations.
- 7 Continue to evaluate the functioning of the Taskforce, to continue to strengthen how the members work together for shared outcomes.

APPROACHES UNDERPINNING THE TASKFORCE

Four approaches were identified to be underpinning the success of the Taskforce for multi-organisation collaboration.

1. Co-design the structure collaboratively from the outset.
2. Utilise expertise-based working groups to drive action.
3. Provide a dedicated program lead and secretariat support.
4. Cultivate a culture of integration and collaboration.

CONCLUSION

The strengths of the Taskforce were evident through the survey and focus groups. The strong leadership from the Chair and the Senior Program Manager were noted to provide a robust foundation for the Taskforce.

The passion of the members was unequivocal, showing strong dedication to improving asbestos management and continuing to work together to achieve this shared goal.

Taskforce Background¹⁻³

The Latrobe Valley community has a strong awareness of, and concern about, the management and disposal of asbestos waste. This is due to a long history of asbestos-related issues stemming from the power industry that arose in the middle of the 20th century.

Taskforce purpose and functions

The Latrobe Valley Asbestos Taskforce (“the Taskforce”) was commissioned by the Victorian Government in 2019 to undertake a review into how asbestos is managed in the Latrobe Valley, including the safe identification, handling and disposal of asbestos across industrial, commercial and residential sites and locations.

The Taskforce brings together a diverse range of stakeholders including state agencies, local government, workers’ representatives and community groups. It aims to bring about consistency, collaboration and improved community engagement and awareness for the management of asbestos.

As detailed in the Terms of Reference², the four key functions of the Taskforce are to:

1. Enquire into and report to Government on current asbestos waste handling processes and safety practices within the public and private sector.
2. Design a plan for the management, demolition, transportation and disposal of asbestos for all Latrobe Valley sites and locations.
3. Make recommendations to Government on the way asbestos waste material will be dealt with in a formal and consistent manner.

4. Engage with and inform the community and industry in the Latrobe Valley on the work and progress of the Taskforce.

Taskforce members

The taskforce brings together government agencies, local councils, unions and community groups including:

- Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning
- Environment Protection Authority
- WorkSafe Victoria
- Department of Families, Fairness and Housing
- Sustainability Victoria
- Latrobe City Council
- Wellington Shire Council
- Baw Baw Shire Council
- Resource Recovery Gippsland
- Latrobe Valley Authority
- Latrobe Health Assembly
- Asbestos Council of Victoria/GARDS Inc.
- Australian Manufacturing Workers Union
- Construction Forestry Mining and Energy Union
- Electrical Trades Union
- Australian Workers Union
- Australian Services Union

Other authorities and agencies are invited to attend and participate in Taskforce discussions and activities as needed.

Taskforce Chair

The Latrobe Health Advocate, Jane Anderson, is the Independent Chair of the Taskforce.



Taskforce program delivery

The Taskforce program is led by a Senior Program Manager funded by the Department of Environment, Land Water and Planning (DELWP). The Senior Program Manager chairs each working group meeting, is responsible for the development of detailed project plans to manage the delivery of agreed action items in the Strategic Plan, manages stakeholder relations including working across all levels of Government and is a central point of coordination for asbestos related matters that involve multiple departments and agencies. The role also includes developing relationships across the asbestos sector at both state and national level and represents the Taskforce on the Victorian Asbestos Forum (State Government), the Asbestos Safety and Eradication Agency's (ASEA) national Asbestos Awareness Committee, as well as other forums such as Sustainability Victoria's Asbestos Disposal Management Plan working group.

In addition, the role is also responsible for drafting submissions to state and national consultations on behalf of the Taskforce, producing reports and actioning the majority of working group tasks, as well as delivering communication and engagement tools, such as the recently produced 'Breathtaking Renovations' video and television commercial and various fact sheets that have been published on www.asbestos.vic.gov.au.

The Senior Program Manager has been supported by another staff member within DELWP to take minutes of all Taskforce and working group meetings until the addition of a full-time program officer to support the work of the Taskforce was appointed in September 2021. This role has been co-funded by DELWP and WorkSafe Victoria and is providing secretariat support for the four meetings each month as well as key communication activities with the community via social media.

Functioning of the Taskforce

The Taskforce was initially established for an intended duration of four years (2019-2022). The way in which the Taskforce functions has evolved over time and will be presented in the section on the Taskforce operating model and structure.

Members of the Taskforce participate by:

- Applying analytical skills, objectivity and judgement
- Expressing opinions frankly and constructively
- Asking questions that go to the fundamental core of an issue
- Committing to undertake work outside of meetings to progress tasks on the agreed meeting actions, where required.

About the partnership analysis

Background

The Latrobe Valley Asbestos Taskforce Multi-stakeholder Partnership Analysis was undertaken to understand how the members of the Taskforce work in partnership. This analysis uncovers the principles that underpin the success of the Taskforce and insight into improvement opportunities. To ensure continued strengthening of the Taskforce, members reflected on the successes and learnings of working together. An independent consultant was engaged to undertake a multi-stakeholder partnership analysis and produce a report outlining the findings, including recommendations to ensure strong collaboration between the members into the future.

Aims

- Document the operation of the working groups to understand the operating model of the Taskforce.
- Determine if the Taskforce has met/ is meeting the objectives in the Strategic Plan.
- Identify the strengths of the Taskforce, and the principles that enable the success of the Taskforce.
- Identify opportunities for improvement into the future to continue to strengthen the Taskforce operating model.

Timeline

Task	Period
Develop a description of the multi-stakeholder partnership model and structure	7 - 13 Feb
Survey development	7 - 13 Feb
Survey open for members to complete	14 - 26 Feb
Survey analysis and selection of focus group questions	1 - 6 Mar
Focus groups	7 - 25 Mar
Results analysis and report preparation	14 - 27 Mar
Draft report (version 1) provided to Senior Program Manager for review	28 - 31 Mar
Draft report (version 2) provided to the Taskforce for review	16 - 26 Apr
Final report delivered	6 May

Partnership analysis method

1. Scoping the operating model

A comprehensive document review was undertaken to understand the Taskforce. Consultation occurred with the Taskforce Senior Program Manager to provide further insights into the Taskforce and its operating model.

2. Survey development, implementation and analysis

A survey was developed to gather information about the members' experiences of participating in the Taskforce.

The survey aim was to gain an initial understanding of how effectively the Taskforce had achieved its strategic objectives. The survey was also intended to help identify ways the Taskforce was successful in working together and areas for improvement.

The survey was conducted online via SurveyMonkey. The independent consultant de-identified the survey responses and undertook a quantitative and thematic analysis. Select survey results were presented during the reflection focus groups in March.

The survey link was emailed to all Members by the independent consultant and was open for responses for two weeks, from 14 – 26 February, 2022.

The survey was designed to gather initial data on three broad themes:

- Achievement of the strategic objectives
- Taskforce strengths for successful collaboration
- Opportunities for improvement and enhancement of the Taskforce functioning.

The survey sought to understand members' experiences of the Taskforce six months post-establishment and in the present day.

The survey questions were selected by the independent consultant in consultation with the Senior Program Manager. The questions were informed by the:

- Latrobe Valley Asbestos Taskforce Strategic Plan³
- New York Partnership Survey⁴
- Vic Health Partnership Survey⁵
- Partnership Analysis Tools, Inner North West Collaborative Evaluation Project (INCEPT).⁶

The survey results were analysed to provide preliminary data to guide the reflective focus groups.





3. Facilitated focus groups

Two focus groups were held with the Taskforce Members in March 2022. The focus groups asked members to provide deeper insights into the functioning of the Taskforce and unearth the values that underpinned the success of the Taskforce.

The conversation was based around some of the findings from the survey which provided discussions around three main areas:

1. Review of the survey responses about how effective the Taskforce was in achieving strategic objectives. Members were asked to reflect on the findings from the survey and discuss/elaborate on the findings of the survey.
2. Review of the survey responses that indicated the strength and success of the Taskforce, with discussion to understand the underlying mechanisms as to why this specific area worked well.
3. Review of the survey responses regarding areas where the Taskforce operations can be strengthened for future collaboration.

Taskforce operating model and structure

Through interviews with the Senior Program Manager and focus groups with the members, the following description of the Taskforce operating model was reported.

STRUCTURE OF THE TASKFORCE

When the Taskforce was originally established it was a singular structure. Through a facilitated workshop, the Taskforce recognised the need to have topic specific working groups to utilise members' expertise in specific action areas, in line with the Strategic Plan. Initially four working groups were established, one for each focus area. After approximately six months, two of the working groups were combined due to overlap of the membership and actions. This enhanced the functioning of the working group as there was a significant amount of overlap across the two focus areas and membership. This enhanced conversations and reduced impetus on members' time.

The structure of the Taskforce and its working groups can be seen in Figure 1. The working group membership is the same people that sit on the Taskforce; therefore, the structure is not viewed as a hierarchy, but instead as considered spaces for the relevant members to collaborate on areas of their expertise. This allows the members of the Taskforce to provide concentrated time and expertise to progress actions. Each working group has a project plan specific to their relevant strategic actions. Where a member organisation viewed the structure as a hierarchy with staff on the working groups and a senior manager from the organisation on the Taskforce, the senior manager's experience and feelings of influence within the Taskforce were inconsistent with the experiences of other members who sat on both the Taskforce and one or more working groups.



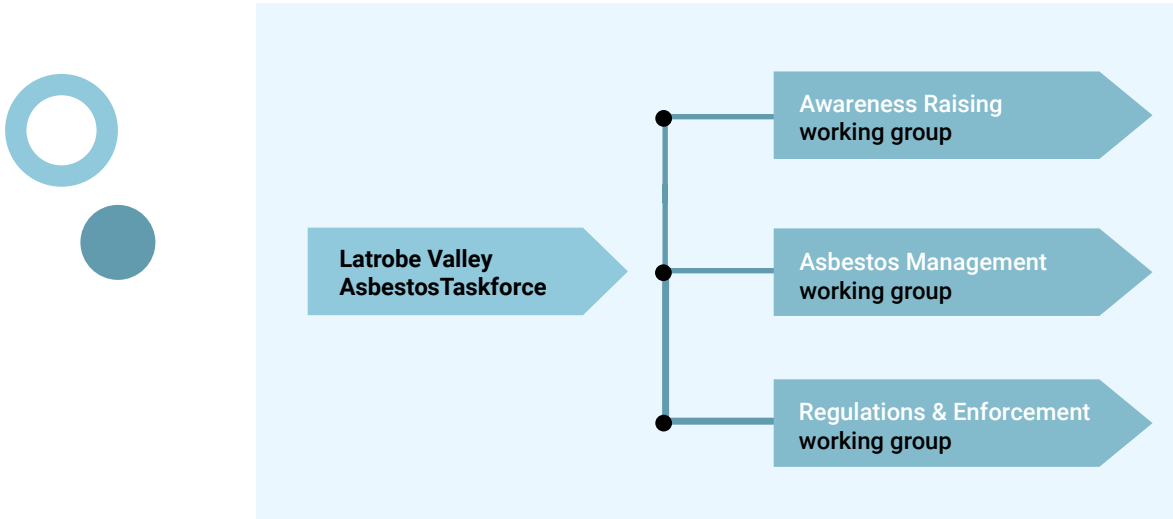


Figure 1. Latrobe Valley Asbestos Taskforce Operating Model.

The Senior Program Manager sits across all three working groups and chairs each working group, providing a conduit of information between groups of expertise. Several members also sit across more than one working group so the relevant people and expertise are present to deliver on the project plans.

When looking at the delineation between the Taskforce and the working groups, the members described the model as follows. The monthly Taskforce meetings bring together the working groups, to provide a high-level overview and conversation of the action happening through the working groups.

The Taskforce also has carriage of reviewing the Terms of Reference and approving the strategic directions and recommendation to Government. The working groups is where the action occurs. The working groups also provide a more informal environment to build trust and collaboration.

MEETING FREQUENCY

The Taskforce and its three working groups each meet monthly. The original design was for the Taskforce and working groups to meet monthly for the first six months, then move to bimonthly meetings. Members decided to continue to meet monthly to keep up the momentum of the Taskforce, reflecting their commitment to the work.

MEMBERSHIP EXPERTISE

All of the stakeholders are equally important. There is mutuality and equality between the members. This was not the case initially when the regulators were viewed as more senior in the social hierarchy. Over time this changed as the members learnt about each other's skills and roles in asbestos management, and the appreciation for the importance of all of the actors in the system grew. It was also acknowledged that the role or position of each member is not as important as their knowledge and expertise of their own operating environment.

Through the working groups, members identified the need for additional expertise to be able to progress the actions. This resulted in new members being engaged to support the actions of the Taskforce. This nimble response to gaps in members knowledge or influence, allowed the working groups to develop over time to ensure they remained able to deliver on the actions of the Taskforce.

After approximately 12 months, the importance of local government representation on all three working groups was evident due to their role in local asbestos management in the residential space. As a result, the three local governments established representation on all three working groups to provide their expertise across all areas. The nuances between how the different Councils worked was also evident, making it valuable to have all three Councils present at working group meetings.

Survey results



Fourteen members completed the survey from a broad cross section of agencies (Figure 2).

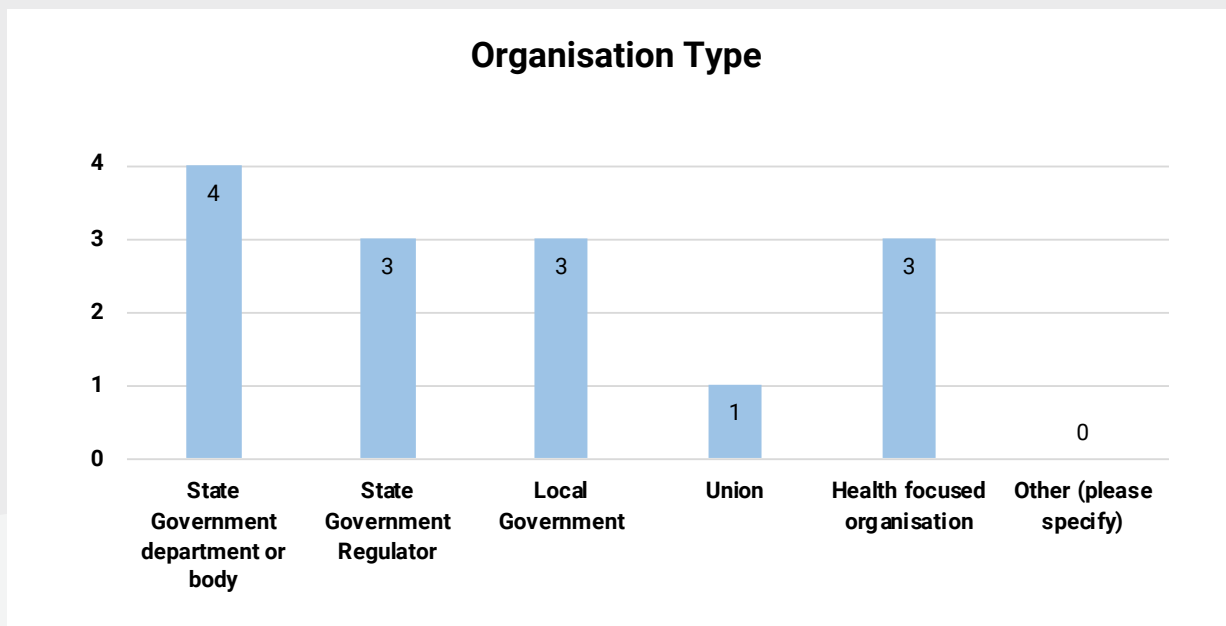


Figure 2. Types of organisations who completed the survey.

Achievement of the strategic objectives

The majority of focus areas of the strategic plan are being either fully or partially met. Members stated that the areas rated as not met/partially met are not a reflection of the Taskforce not being effective, but instead a reflection on some of the strategic focus areas beyond the control and influence of the Taskforce.

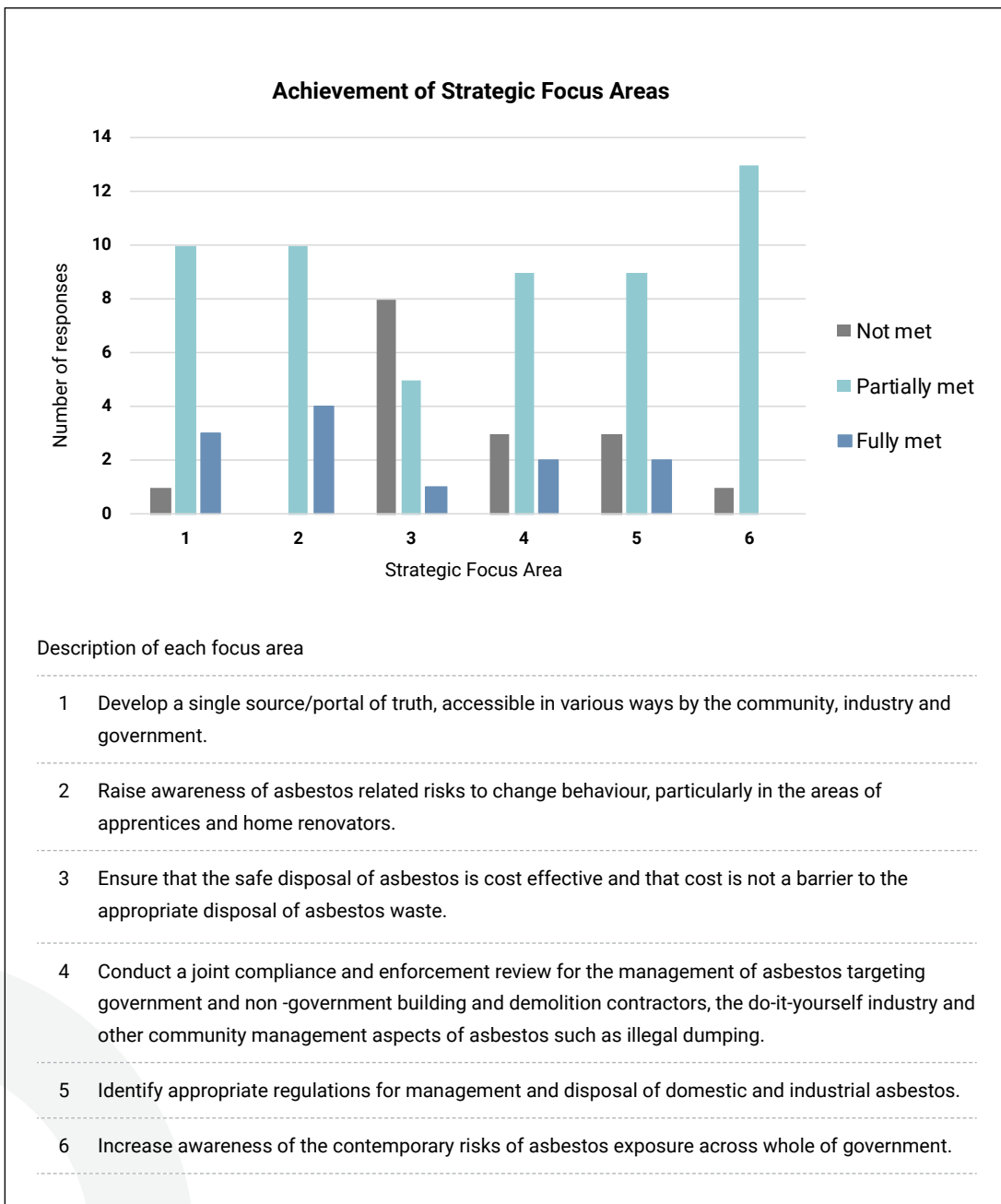



Figure 3. Achievement of strategic focus areas.



"Some of the strategic objectives were ambitious to begin with however, this wasn't necessarily obvious when we were developing the plan. It is not until we actually get into the doing that you realise, some of these things are not achievable in the way you thought they might be or are outside of the taskforce remit to control or influence."

"Good progress has been made, but still awaiting whether government actions year 1 recommendations & if so to what degree/extent."

"This work is long haul for change, so the fact that none of the objectives are fully met is not a negative."

"Raising awareness of the issues with asbestos is an ever changing and ongoing task"

"It would be hard for LVAT to 'fully meet' these requirements as the doing of the work sits elsewhere"
[regarding focus area 3]

"Some of these objectives have not been met and the LVAT needs to be refunded to continue this work beyond the next election - bipartisan support needs to be obtained - no other entity in Victoria is doing all of this with everyone in the room - it is important for this to continue long into the future."



Members' self-rated experience of the Taskforce

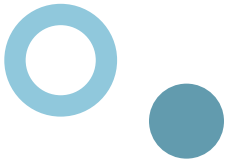
A summary of the survey questions is presented in the table below, with questions having a maximum score of 5.0. This is followed by the responses divided up into three sections being areas of strength (weighted average score ≥ 4), areas that rated well but could be improved (weighted average score of 3.51-3.99), and areas for improvement (weighted average score ≤ 3.50).

Twenty-seven questions were asked to understand member's experiences with the Taskforce and how they have changed from the first six months of the

Taskforce to the present day. Of the 27 measures, all except two improved from six months to the present day. However, it should be noted that the two measures that declined still recorded relatively strong weighted average scores.

In total, 17 measures had a weighted average score ≥ 4 , 6 measures had a weighted average score of 3.51-3.99 and only two measures had a weighted average score ≤ 3.50 .

		Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Not Sure	Agree	Strongly Agree	Weighted Average (max 5/5)	Increase/decrease
There is a clear goal for the Taskforce.	6 Months in	0.00%	16.67%	16.67%	66.67%	0.00%	3.50	+0.56
	Present day	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	71.43%	28.57%	4.29	
There is a shared understanding of, and commitment to, this goal among all members.	6 Months in	0.00%	16.67%	16.67%	58.33%	8.33%	3.58	+0.56
	Present day	0.00%	7.14%	7.14%	50.00%	35.71%	4.14	
All members are involved in planning and setting priorities for collaborative action.	6 Months in	0.00%	15.38%	23.08%	53.85%	7.69%	3.54	+0.34
	Present day	0.00%	7.14%	21.43%	50.00%	21.43%	3.86	
The members are willing to share some of their ideas, resources, influence and power to fulfil the Taskforce goals.	6 Months in	0.00%	15.38%	7.69%	46.15%	30.77%	3.92	+0.65
	Present day	0.00%	0.00%	7.14%	28.57%	64.29%	4.57	
The members share common values and interests.	6 Months in	0.00%	7.69%	7.69%	53.85%	30.77%	4.08	+0.21
	Present day	0.00%	0.00%	21.43%	28.57%	50.00%	4.29	
Differences in organisational priorities, goals and expectations that may influence the functioning of the Taskforce have been addressed.	6 Months in	7.69%	15.38%	23.08%	53.85%	0.00%	3.23	+0.27
	Present day	0.00%	7.14%	35.71%	57.14%	0.00%	3.50	
There is enough variety among members to have a comprehensive understanding of the issues being addressed.	6 Months in	0.00%	0.00%	7.69%	84.62%	7.69%	4.00	+0.14
	Present day	0.00%	7.14%	0.00%	64.29%	28.57%	4.14	
The members are able to identify new and creative ways to solve problems.	6 Months in	0.00%	0.00%	30.77%	69.23%	0.00%	3.69	+0.38
	Present day	0.00%	0.00%	7.14%	78.57%	14.29%	4.07	
By working together, the members are able to include the views and priorities of the people affected by the Taskforce's work.	6 Months in	0.00%	0.00%	15.38%	76.92%	7.69%	3.92	+0.29
	Present day	0.00%	0.00%	7.14%	64.29%	28.57%	4.21	
The senior leaders in each organisation support the Taskforce.	6 Months in	0.00%	7.69%	46.15%	38.46%	7.69%	3.46	+0.25
	Present day	0.00%	0.00%	42.86%	42.86%	14.29%	3.71	



		Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Not Sure	Agree	Strongly Agree	Weighted Average (max 5/5)	Increase/decrease
Members have the necessary skills for collaborative action.	6 months in	0.00%	8.33%	41.67%	50.00%	0.00%	3.42	+0.65
	Present day	0.00%	0.00%	14.29%	64.29%	21.43%	4.07	
The roles, responsibilities and expectations of Members are clearly defined and understood.	6 months in	0.00%	15.38%	15.38%	69.23%	0.00%	3.54	+0.53
	Present day	0.00%	0.00%	7.14%	78.57%	14.29%	4.07	
The range of working group members are reviewed as needed and new members are added to expand the group's expertise.	6 months in	7.69%	15.38%	7.69%	69.23%	0.00%	3.38	-0.17
	Present day	14.29%	7.14%	35.71%	28.57%	14.29%	3.21	
The Taskforce administrative, communication and decision-making structures are as simple as possible.	6 months in	0.00%	15.38%	0.00%	84.62%	0.00%	3.69	+0.24
	Present day	0.00%	0.00%	7.14%	92.86%	0.00%	3.93	
There is a participatory decision-making system that is accountable, responsive and inclusive.	6 months in	0.00%	8.33%	16.67%	66.67%	8.33%	3.75	+0.25
	Present day	0.00%	7.69%	0.00%	76.92%	15.38%	4.00	
There are strategies to ensure alternative views are expressed within the Taskforce.	6 months in	0.00%	0.00%	23.08%	61.54%	15.38%	3.92	+0.29
	Present day	0.00%	0.00%	7.14%	64.29%	28.57%	4.21	
The perceived benefits of the Taskforce outweigh the perceived costs and/or time commitments.	6 months in	0.00%	8.33%	16.67%	66.67%	8.33%	3.75	+0.25
	Present day	0.00%	7.69%	7.69%	61.54%	23.08%	4.00	
The Taskforce is adding value (rather than duplicating services) for the community and members involved in the Taskforce.	6 months in	0.00%	0.00%	23.08%	69.23%	7.69%	3.85	+0.22
	Present day	0.00%	0.00%	7.14%	78.57%	14.29%	4.07	
There is a core group of skilled, committed members that has continued over the life of the Taskforce.	6 months in	0.00%	0.00%	15.38%	53.85%	30.77%	4.15	+0.21
	Present day	0.00%	0.00%	7.14%	50.00%	42.86%	4.36	
Members communicate and promote the work of the Taskforce in their own organisations.	6 months in	0.00%	0.00%	30.77%	61.54%	7.69%	3.77	+0.09
	Present day	0.00%	0.00%	28.57%	57.14%	14.29%	3.86	
Members feel motivated and empowered about their involvement with the Taskforce.	6 months in	0.00%	0.00%	33.33%	58.33%	8.33%	3.75	+0.02
	Present day	0.00%	0.00%	30.77%	61.54%	7.69%	3.77	
There is high level administration of the Taskforce, including meeting administration and preparing materials to help members have informed discussions and make timely decisions.	6 months in	0.00%	7.69%	15.38%	38.46%	38.46%	4.08	+0.42
	Present day	0.00%	0.00%	14.29%	21.43%	64.29%	4.50	
The Taskforce has robust evaluation processes in place to ensure it is meeting its aims.	6 months in	0.00%	15.38%	38.46%	38.46%	7.69%	3.38	+0.05
	Present day	0.00%	0.00%	28.57%	50.00%	21.43%	3.93	
I am satisfied with the way the people and organisations in the Taskforce work together.	6 months in	0.00%	15.38%	0.00%	76.92%	7.69%	3.77	+0.59
	Present day	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	64.29%	35.71%	4.36	
I am satisfied with my influence in the Taskforce.	6 months in	0.00%	0.00%	23.08%	53.85%	23.08%	4.00	-0.21
	Present day	0.00%	7.14%	21.43%	57.14%	14.29%	3.79	
I am satisfied with my role in the Taskforce.	6 months in	0.00%	7.69%	7.69%	69.23%	15.38%	3.92	+0.08
	Present day	0.00%	7.14%	7.14%	64.29%	21.43%	4.00	

Summary of strengths of the Taskforce and areas for improvement

STRENGTHS OF THE TASKFORCE

The survey identified the following elements to be **strengths of the Taskforce**:

- | | |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <p>1 There is a clear goal for the Taskforce.</p> | <p>10 The Taskforce is adding value (rather than duplicating services) for the community and members involved in the Taskforce.</p> |
| <p>2 There is a shared understanding of, and commitment to, this goal among all members.</p> | <p>11 There is high level administration of the Taskforce, including meeting administration and preparing materials to help members have informed discussions and make timely decisions.</p> |
| <p>3 The members are willing to share some of their ideas, resources, influence and power to fulfil the Taskforce goals.</p> | <p>12 There are strategies to ensure alternative views are expressed within the Taskforce.</p> |
| <p>4 The members share common values and interests.</p> | <p>13 The perceived benefits of the Taskforce outweigh the perceived costs and/or time commitments.</p> |
| <p>5 There is enough variety among members to have a comprehensive understanding of the issues being addressed.</p> | <p>14 There is a core group of skilled and committed members that has continued over the life of the Taskforce.</p> |
| <p>6 The members are able to identify new and creative ways to solve problems.</p> | <p>15 Members have the necessary skills for collaborative action.</p> |
| <p>7 By working together, the members are able to include the views and priorities of the people affected by the Taskforce's work.</p> | <p>16 I am satisfied with the way the people and organisations in the Taskforce work together.</p> |
| <p>8 The roles, responsibilities and expectations of Members are clearly defined and understood.</p> | <p>17 I am satisfied with my role in the Taskforce.</p> |
| <p>9 There is a participatory decision-making system that is accountable, responsive and inclusive.</p> | |

WHAT COULD BE FURTHER IMPROVED

The survey identified the following areas of the Taskforce **worked well, but could be further improved**:

- 1 All members are involved in planning and setting priorities for collaborative action.
- 2 The senior leaders in each organisation support the Taskforce.
- 3 The administrative, communication and decision-making structure of the Taskforce is as simple as possible.
- 4 Members communicate and promote the work of the Taskforce in their own organisations.
- 5 The Taskforce has robust evaluation processes in place to ensure it is meeting its aims.
- 6 Members feel motivated and empowered about their involvement with the Taskforce.
- 7 I am satisfied with my influence in the Taskforce.

OPPORTUNITIES FOR IMPROVEMENT

The survey identified the following areas of the Taskforce as **opportunities for improvement**:

- 1 Differences in organisational priorities, goals and expectations that may influence the functioning of the Taskforce have been addressed.
- 2 The range of working group members are reviewed as needed and new members are added to expand the group's expertise.

Level of integration of the Taskforce

Partners were asked to rate on the integration continuum where they feel the Taskforce was working, and where they feel it could have been working.

The majority of members felt the Taskforce currently operates at the levels of coordination and collaboration. Members expressed that they feel the Taskforce could develop this to be working at collaboration – integration. These results were discussed further in the focus groups.

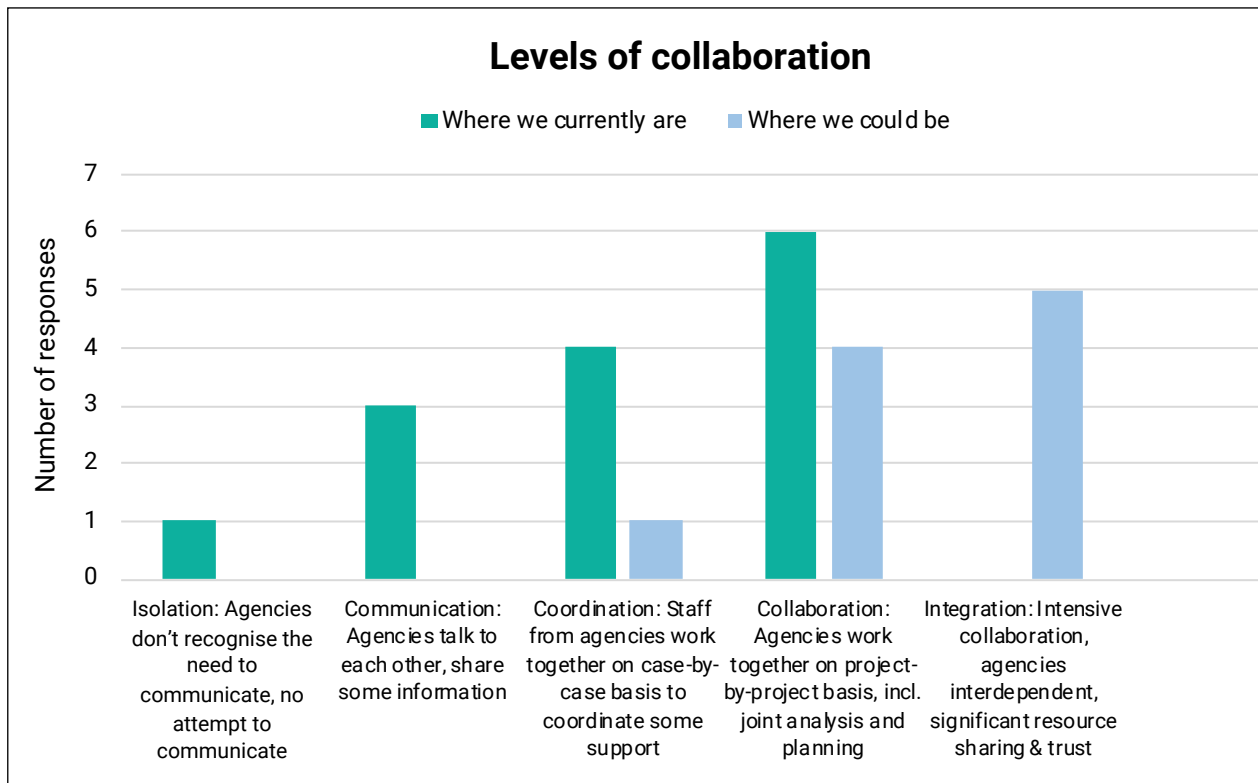


Figure 4. Levels of collaboration and integration of the Taskforce.

“Higher integration would need to be priority/direction of agency higher management.”

“Some agencies work together on some projects and on an as needs basis, but not all. My assessment is somewhere between Communication and Coordination.”

“There are difficulties when there are government, non-government and regulators in the room in terms of level of ‘sharing’ ”

Future of the Taskforce

The vast majority of members felt there is a need for this Taskforce to continue in some form, and most are committed to continuing the collaboration. These results were discussed further in the focus groups. Additional survey comments from members can be found in the Appendix.

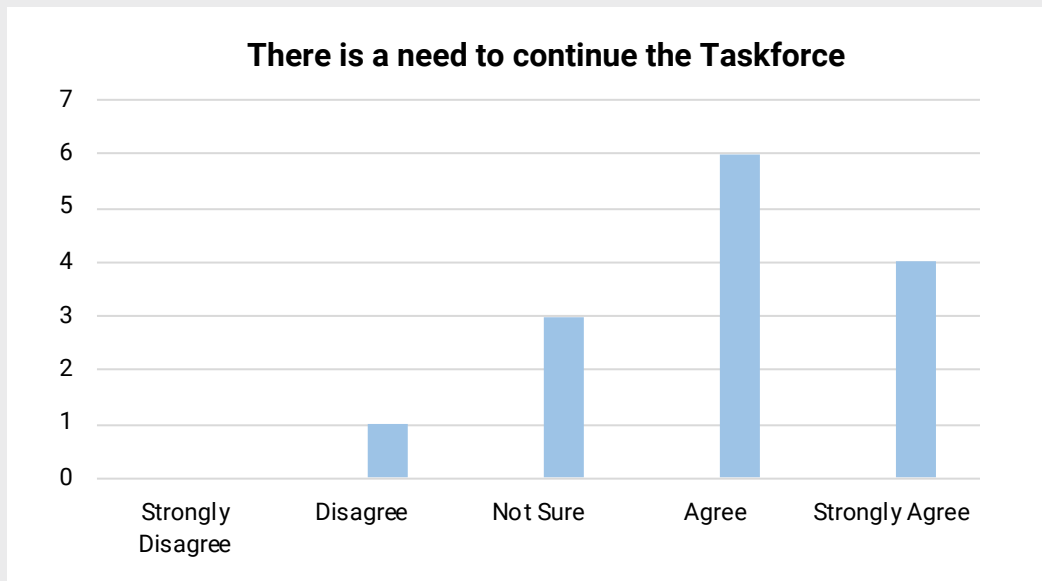


Figure 5. Future need for the Taskforce.

“If an IDC [inter-departmental committee] was established instead, a higher profile and state-wide implementation of recommendations could be achieved. There could be local area-based governance structures to support the work as well. The future look needs much more consideration re options to enable best outcomes/impact.”

“There is probably an ongoing need to the work to continue but adjustments might need to be made to the form in which people participate or are members.”

“My knowledge in the asbestos [space] has increased rapidly due to listening to, and learning from, the diverse range of views in the room. The taskforce, or a similar state-wide forum would be of value in the space. A clear strategy, that has actions that are suitably resourced is also needed. There is a risk that an ambitious agenda / strategy without the dollars, staff or organisational commitment to support it will not meet expectations.”

Focus group results

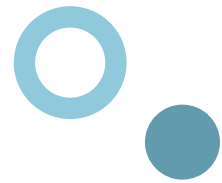
Two reflective focus groups were conducted with members to provide deeper insights into their experiences with the Taskforce.

The focus groups were attended by representatives from twelve member organisations. The participating organisations and the number of working groups they sit on (in addition to the Taskforce) are listed at right.

Participants were introduced to the results of the survey and were asked to expand on the survey questions with their reflections.

ORGANISATION	NUMBER OF WORKING GROUPS
Asbestos Council of Victoria/ GARDS Inc.	2
Australian Manufacturing Workers Union	1
Baw Baw Shire Council	3
Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning	3
Environment Protection Authority	1
Latrobe City Council	3
Latrobe Health Advocate (Chair)	
Latrobe Health Assembly	1
Latrobe Valley Authority	1
Resource Recovery Gippsland	1
Sustainability Victoria	1
WorkSafe Victoria	2





Achievement of the strategic objectives

The facilitator presented the degree to which the survey respondents felt the Taskforce has achieved its strategic focus areas.

The members commented that some of the strategic focus areas were idealistic and may not be something the Taskforce can achieve, and some wording changes are needed. An example of this is focus area three where the members felt they could advocate change but could not ensure it. The members discussed that the strategic plan was under review and there was a suggested wording change to this focus area specifically to reflect the Taskforce's role in 'promoting and advocating to influence' rather than 'ensuring'. The members commented that while having a vision for the ultimate goal they want to achieve, the focus areas need to be achievable.

"It was anecdotal that everyone thought cost was a barrier... but some of the other work that has been done through surveys and working with different groups has actually born out that this actually is an impact so there's data now to back that up, and it's probably not within the Taskforce to say 'yes, we can get another cheap asbestos site built'...but there's a role still for the Taskforce to advocate based on the information we have garnished that it is still an issue..."

The members also discussed that if the Taskforce success was measured against the degree to which they had achieved each focus area, this may be potentially detrimental. The members feel the Taskforce is performing well and that having not met some of the focus areas is not an indication of under-performance.

"When you look at that [the survey results] and say 'is it not met', is it a failure, well no. It is actually a target that still needs to be reached, we haven't finished the job [yet]..."

The members discussed that when the initial strategic plan was developed, some of the information informing the directions was anecdotal. Three years into the Taskforce, they have a much better picture of the issues and are in a better position to determine where the Taskforce focus should be placed.

"If you have a goal that is not attainable, then it is not really a goal – it is a dream; and it can be a good aspiration to be working towards but do you [the other taskforce members] feel that something that we could attain..."

The Strengths of the Taskforce

The facilitator presented the strengths of the Taskforce, as identified by the survey respondents.

Members agreed with the survey results and commented on the numerous strengths of the Taskforce.

Members stated that the diversity of organisations and expertise of members was critical to the success of the Taskforce.

Holding meetings virtually (initially due to COVID-19 travel restrictions) has also allowed for a broader cross section of participation as members from across Gippsland and Melbourne are able to attend more regularly.

The members feel shared responsibility and values and commitment to removing asbestos from their communities.

Members commented that there has not been a lot of turnover in the membership which has created consistency of members' acquired knowledge.

Members also stated that they feel that there is a strong positive culture in the Taskforce, where everyone's views are respected and they can trust each other.

"That diversity of view and organisation is really important and useful and having other colleagues who are from different organisations... who are in the same space as me...has been really helpful."

"The strengths really come from the diversity of the people on the taskforce. You've got your on the ground officers who are dealing with the coal face... right through to more senior staff that might be involved in broader policy development..."

"There hasn't been a lot of turnover of people...we were meeting face to face but because of COVID... two years of virtual meetings have allowed other people to be a part of it...who would normally have to travel...people obviously see value because the same people have been coming for nearly four years."

"There was a real sense of really being listened to and everyone's contributions being seen equally."

The members also commented that having a dedicated program manager for the Taskforce was reported as a critical driver of the success of the Taskforce. Having a dedicated program lead has allowed the Taskforce members to focus on the application of their knowledge to the issues at hand.

The Senior Program Manager provides a dedicated person to undertake the meeting planning and preparation and a central point for communications and information sharing.

The importance of the independent Chair was also noted, stating that the strong leadership provided by the Chair and Senior Program Manager were instrumental in the Taskforce successes.

“Having a project manager for the Taskforce...is a really key aspect... it does mean that we’re coming to these meetings, and they’re prepared, the information is there, we know what we’re going to talk about...it’s helped with the relationship because we’ve all been well organised for the meetings...”

The members felt the Taskforce has achieved its success through co-designed beginnings where they worked together to develop the strategic plan based on their expertise and experiences in the field. During the initial planning stages, they developed a shared focus for the Taskforce and shared their passion for asbestos management within their communities.

“...there was a lot of storming, norming in the beginning... getting that shared focus and actually developing the strategy that we all agreed on as a collective working through that process, so we had a direction we were going in...we are all committed to that, we all have a stake in this space...that really impacts on how we work together.”

“There is both a shared passion and a shared want...they really want to be there and they really want to solve the problem...”

The operating model was discussed as a strength of the Taskforce. The members stated that the model provides a forum for local and state-wide specialist expertise.


The model also continues to evolve and learn from experience, such as when two working groups were integrated into one to increase effectiveness. The structure was also commended. Having the relevant Taskforce members on each working group provides a place for members to utilise their expertise to work through actions. It means the people who have the knowledge and understand the space can take concerted time to work through the issues collectively. The working groups are across the detail of each action area and work at an operational level. This allows the conversations at the Taskforce to remain more strategic.

The working groups also provide opportunities to increase trust between members as they are working more closely in a more informal way than at the Taskforce level. Having the Senior Program Manager across all working groups has ensured continuity of information and has been pivotal to the success of the operating model.

“...its strength is having those three working groups because you have got people who understand the space...there are people who have expert knowledge...”

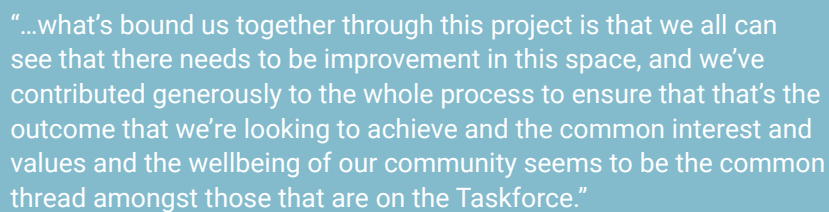
“...the working groups allow for a bit more flexibility and informal relationship building...it’s a supportive environment.”





Members also stated the importance of being committed to the working groups, because without this commitment the structure would not be as strong as it is. One member queried whether the Taskforce would be as strong if it wasn't a State Government commitment.



Ultimately, the members felt their commitment to the Taskforce was due to their passion for the work and their collective desire to overcome the shared issues they experience.



“...what's bound us together through this project is that we all can see that there needs to be improvement in this space, and we've contributed generously to the whole process to ensure that that's the outcome that we're looking to achieve and the common interest and values and the wellbeing of our community seems to be the common thread amongst those that are on the Taskforce.”

Members spoke of the strong collaboration that occurs in the working group meetings and spoke of the inclusive nature of the working groups, where everyone has the opportunity to participate and contribute their expertise.

The importance of members being involved on both the Taskforce meetings and the working groups was stated, with members noting that being involved on multiple working groups and the Taskforce helped to strengthen the collaborative nature of the Taskforce.



Opportunities for improvement

The facilitator presented the areas identified by the survey respondents as opportunities for continued growth of the Taskforce.

MOTIVATION AND EMPOWERMENT

Members commented that while they were dedicated to the Taskforce, they had workloads of their own and the need to balance the two was important to ensure they remained active in the Taskforce. Members also stated that the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic may also be contributing to motivation not being at an optimal level, and therefore any reductions in motivation not being specific to the Taskforce. One member commented that people's motivation and empowerment may also be affected if they are having difficulties with buy-in within their internal organisation.

Members commented they were still waiting on the response to the recommendations they put to the State Government in 2020. The government's delay in responding was causing some members to feel less empowered than they potentially could be.

"...we're still waiting for Government's response to the first set of recommendations. It would be understandable that that might raise some question about people's motivation or feel that they can make a difference about the work here. We've made a lot of impact in terms of other things but the real core central reform pieces that we're looking to achieve through the recommendations – the fact that's taken a considerable period of time...may be impacting on people feeling empowered that, that is going to result in change."

"...I've been waiting to see those recommendations be adopted by State Government after all those hours of work we've put it, I would hope that this would get some priority..."



INFLUENCE

Members commented that they felt they had influence within the Taskforce but their influence outside of the Taskforce may be a challenge. This may also be linked to their influence within their own organisations. One member also discussed that their influence (outside of the Taskforce) can feel inhibited when they present the realities of the situation but aren't believed by people not working in the field.

Members also commented that their influence in and outside of the Taskforce can also be impacted by their own work priorities. If they have less time for the work of the Taskforce, then their influence can feel reduced.

Members also stated that the Taskforce worked well because it was not bureaucratic, and this needed to continue in future iterations of the Taskforce. The members talked about the need to ensure that the balance of membership in the next iteration of the Taskforce was appropriate, so they can make decisions and have the necessary expertise to progress the actions.

"...it's important to have people around the table who feel that they can genuinely represent their organisation and they're empowered to make decisions and provide input into the conversations..."

"I think it's a bit to do with organisational priorities...how much time we can dedicate to the Taskforce. The less amount of time that we feel we can do that, the less amount of influence that we feel that we have."

"...people need to have the ability to make decisions, and let's not make it too bureaucratic..."



COMMUNICATIONS

Members commented on ways they could improve how they communicate and promote the work of the Taskforce in their own organisations.

They requested that an easy-to-read short summary document be provided by the Senior Program Manager, which they could circulate internally.

“...any achievements or things that come out of the Taskforce – it is always better if it is in a simple format that we can push out to our organisation.”

One member also stated that the video the Taskforce developed was easy to share and was a great way to promote the work of the Taskforce.

“...the video was a very easy one to share out to the community...very easy to take in...a lot of the other information that we receive is probably not aimed directly at community, so having a community language version of what we want to share might be a good option.”

They suggested community facing communications may be a good way to increase knowledge and awareness of the work of the Taskforce.

“...some key messaging that can be produced from the Taskforce that we can share up the chain, rather than large documents...just those monthly key developments...”



DIFFERENCES IN ORGANISATIONAL PRIORITIES

Members discussed how differences in organisational priorities, goals and expectations may influence the functioning of the Taskforce have been addressed.

Members stated that this may not be within the influence of some members, where asbestos management may form only a small part of the work their organisations do.

Members also stated that differences in organisational priorities is inherent, and that the Taskforce is trying to address this through its recommendations to Government.

The members stated that the 'who does what' matrix could possibly help to inform members' priorities and how they operate.

Some members felt this may be affected by the stage the Taskforce is in and that it may be an opportune time to re-orient the work of the Taskforce and plan for the next iteration of the model. This would also allow members the opportunity to review who sits on the Taskforce, to ensure representation from those who are best placed to value-add to the work. However, members also raised the need to balance reviewing the membership whilst not losing the acquired knowledge of the existing members.

The members also stated that initially they were unsure how the Taskforce would progress and now that the directions and functions of the Taskforce are more established, it would be a good time to revisit organisational priorities, the authority of the Taskforce and the role of the members within this.

"...there is limitations on each individual's ability to re-align their organisational priorities given that we are not all the CEOs of our respective remits..."

"Now that we're moving more into the delivery stage... we're a big organisation... where does this fit in my organisation and where is the influence with the Taskforce when we get to this stage... when we get to this delivery stage...it becomes a bit more challenging or maybe the support you're wanting is different and it was good in the strategy part but maybe that same support isn't relevant in the delivery part."

"...there is this lifecycle and there has to be a review as part of that and the learnings that we've had, but...one of the really good strengths that we've got is that we haven't had a change of membership and we've had pretty good consistency and we've got really good relationships..."

"...when we set out on this journey...none of us had expectations on where it might end up... looking at potentially continuing the work of the Taskforce, being really clear about its authority and its role is something we probably need to think about because we're probably not sure about what our operating authority is, either representing an organisation on the Taskforce or the Taskforce as a whole. So, it might feel that those things are not aligning for people..."

MEMBERSHIP

Members discussed the range of working group members, how they are reviewed and how to ensure they continue to expand the group's expertise to meet the needs of the Taskforce

Members discussed that past membership reviews have brought a greater depth to the knowledge and expertise around the table. They also noted the ability to call on the expertise of others, without needing them to formally join the Taskforce.

Members commented they should remind each other in meetings that they can request additional members and expertise if they feel it is needed.

The members also discussed that there may be a risk that the group becomes too closed if they feel they have all of the relevant expertise at the table, and the need to be aware of this to ensure they continue to bring in additional support where needed.

"...our charter accommodates that we will draw in specific people as need dictates, so really that's up to members... to propose that that occurs... in a meeting we can just issue a reminder of that...if you feel we need someone, don't be shy, propose it."

LEVELS OF INTEGRATION OF THE TASKFORCE

Members discussed the level to which they felt they were working in cooperation, collaboration and integration

Members spoke about asbestos management being siloed and traditionally working in isolation. Therefore, the members rating current work levels as co-operative and collaborative is a positive step.

Members discussed the desire to improve this further and work at the levels of collaboration and integration.

They thought that understanding the goals of the organisations, and how they align with the Taskforce could help to advance the collaborative practice.

Members discussed that they have already experienced collaboration and integration through projects such as the 'Breathtaking Renovations' video. One member (WorkSafe) has also financially contributed to the Taskforce, showing integration of resources to help achieve the shared aim. Members also discussed that further integration could be achieved by integrating the work of the Taskforce into member organisations' business plans to ensure resource/human commitment to the vision of the Taskforce.

"...there is a siloed approach to the management of asbestos and parts of it sit in lots of different areas of government and community. There is that lack of coordinated approach to the issue. We've done quite a bit of work looking at the regulatory and legislative environment and greater alignment between the regulators in that space and how they share information and work together. So, I think there is definitely an opportunity for greater integrated approach across the issue..."

"...need a more formal process where the Taskforce as an activity and commitment is part of an annual business plan across organisation, because certainly that's when you get the resource commitment and more intensive relationship where it is a shared priority across organisations..."



Future of the Taskforce

Members discussed their commitment to the future of the Taskforce. Members stated they want to see the Taskforce continue, but what the next iteration looks like is currently unknown. They felt the recommendations they put to the State Government would be a lever to drive the next phase of the Taskforce.

Members stated that formal communications to the executives of the member organisations should be made, outlining the need to continue the Taskforce and seeking their ongoing commitment. The members reiterated the importance of funding to support the work and the need for a dedicated program manager into the next phase.

The members felt that the place-based approach of the Taskforce was a strength, and that community and local organisations take ownership and drive projects like that of the Taskforce. However, members also felt there was opportunity to expand support regionally and/or state-wide as the issues and barriers are similar across the state.

Ultimately, members felt the Taskforce needed to continue as it had made great progress to date, but there was more to be done.

“...people see that there needs to be something continue, what it looks like ultimately still needs to be worked through...”

“...there is a balance between...many things we are dealing with are state-wide it's not just an issue for the Latrobe Valley...there is that state-wide component but having that regional perspective about how some of those issues play out on the ground. So, I don't know if there is any future thinking that could look at that model where there is that sort of model that is state-wide and with regional aspects to the Taskforce or working groups or the like.”

“...what the model looks like going into the future, we've proved it works, we've proved that you can make change and that you can identify the issues and a lot of the stuff that is coming out of Gippsland will resonate right across Victoria. It resonates right across Australia...”

“...if you can prove it works in this area, it can work in other areas. How that looks in a scale or a model is something that we all need to work out as we go forward.”

Recommendations for the future

The following recommendations relate to the 'opportunities for improvement' identified through the multi-stakeholder partnership analysis.

- 
- 1 Continue to utilise the strengths of the Taskforce and build on the member expertise and experience to further progress the work of the Taskforce, bringing in new expertise as needed.
 - 2 Undertake an evolutionary Taskforce planning session to co-develop the next iteration of the model including consideration of a place based, regional and/or state-wide approach.
 - 3 When developing the next phase of the Taskforce, spend concentrated time on discussing the differences in organisational priorities, goals and expectations that may influence the functioning of the Taskforce and determine ways to address these from the outset.
 - 4 Explore opportunities to embed the aim of the Taskforce into member organisations strategic directive to enhance integration of the work.
 - 5 Continue to undertake collaborative reviews of the strategic plan and focus areas based on the knowledge and experiences of the members to ensure it is achievable and reflective of the current issues in the Latrobe Valley.
 - 6 Regularly develop easy-to-read short summary documents outlining the progress of the Taskforce and distribute to members for circulation within their organisations.
 - 7 Continue to evaluate the functioning of the Taskforce, to continue to strengthen how the members work together for shared outcomes.

Building a strong Taskforce: How to create a successful partnership approach

The learnings from this multi-stakeholder partnership analysis can be used by other taskforces or collaborative groups to strengthen their approaches to partnership work. Learning from the success of the Taskforce, the following approaches should be applied to ensure success when driving change through a multi-organisation collaboration.

1

Co-design the structure collaboratively from the outset

Draw on the skills, expertise and passion of the members in the room to develop an understanding of the issue and how it can be improved. Work collaboratively to set the vision for the future and determine any additional expertise that should be involved.

2

Utilise expertise-based working groups to drive action

Working groups specific to each focus area can foster trust and collaboration between members. Drawing from the same membership pool as the Taskforce is important to ensure members don't view the structure as a hierarchy. This ensures members all operate on a level field but have different forums to discuss the focus areas from different aspects of the work.

3

Provide a dedicated program leader and secretariat support

Ensure the Taskforce program delivery is led by a program manager whose sole work portfolio is to lead and coordinate all aspects of the Taskforce. Taking this dedicated approach will ensure the program manager has the time necessary to undertake the role and isn't having to prioritise it over other competing work demands. This also allows the Taskforce members to focus on driving the change on the ground. It also provides members with a central point of contact, allowing them to gather information to progress their work quickly and efficiently.

In addition to the dedicated program manager, resourcing should also be provided for secretariat support as it creates a robust administration foundation to ensure optimal functioning.

4

Cultivate a culture of integration and collaboration

Create a culture where members feel safe to learn from each other and grow in the space. Support collaborative action through trust building and providing space for people to work to their strengths and expertise.

Conclusion

This report was undertaken to understand how the members of the Latrobe Valley Asbestos Taskforce work in partnership. This analysis uncovers the principles that underpin the success of the Taskforce and insight into improvement opportunities.

The taskforce operating model was presented and discussed, showing the strength of the working group structure deliver on the actions of the strategic plan. The Taskforce was determined to be successfully progressing toward its strategic focus areas and noted the progress that had been made over the past three years.

The strengths of the Taskforce were investigated through 27 measures. Overwhelmingly, 17 measures had a weighted average score ≥ 4 showing strong partnership approaches of the Taskforce. Six measures had a weighted average score of 3.51-3.99, showing areas that were working well but could be improved upon and only two measures had a weighted average score ≤ 3.50 .

Members discussed opportunities for improvement into the future to continue to strengthen the Taskforce operating model.

Members remain committed to the Taskforce and are invested in the collaborative development of the next phase.

The strengths of the Taskforce were evident through the survey and focus groups. The strong leadership from the Chair and the Senior Program Manager were noted to provide a robust foundation for the Taskforce.

The passion of the members was unequivocal, showing strong dedication to improving asbestos management and continuing to work together to achieve this shared goal.

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Appendix

Additional comments on the following two pages were received from Taskforce members via the survey.

"I think there's a great mix of people at the table."

"I think indigenous, community and health organisations should be considered for membership."

"Membership has also evolved as the taskforce has identified the need for it to."

With regard to 'senior leaders in each organisation support the Taskforce', members commented:

"I can't comment on other organisations - only my own"

"Leaders support the work of the Taskforce."

"Perhaps in principle but in practice, I am not so sure."

"I think the [roles, responsibilities and expectations of members] could be better defined and 'signed off' by member organisation's senior management / decision makers"

"I think there is good consultation to develop materials, messages, documents etc. I think the formal decision making process could be clearer in the TOR"

"There are strategies to ensure alternative views are expressed within the Taskforce - [This] has always been case."

"I think working groups are well coordinated and agendas, papers and minutes provided in a timely manner. People can provide comment in meets or via email, phone etc"

"Not sure there is an actual strategy for this [there are strategies to ensure alternative views are expressed within the Taskforce], however members are generally free to express their view even if it's not considered."

With regard to the question 'the perceived benefits of the Taskforce outweigh the perceived costs and/or time commitments', members commented:

"Not sure about the question - relative burden is a question of priorities."

"Not an easy one to answer, particularly for organisations whose core work is not about asbestos specifically. Time spent reading reports that don't have relevance to immediate work is difficult to justify when priorities are competing."

With regard to the question 'the Taskforce is adding value (rather than duplicating services) for the community and members involved in the Taskforce', members commented:

"Not duplicating... rather has identified & actioned gaps to avoid duplicating."

"Agree in so far as the Taskforce is supporting a collaboration for the long term outcome."

"Except in the regulation space."

"I think lack of resources / time present challenges around motivation and ability to take clear actions"

"Members are definitely motivated to improve Asbestos management outcomes."

"There are some members who are very motivated and empowered by the work of the taskforce and others where it is more complicated."

"Meetings are well coordinated and agendas, papers and minutes provided in a timely manner."

"Took a while to establish roles and responsibilities and still struggle with competing priorities."


"Number of hours per month are hard to balance with existing workloads. However, my involvement has been very rewarding and supported my own professional development and knowledge in the asbestos space"

"I think the membership of DFFH should be reconsidered. A rep from the DoH [Department of Health] might be more appropriate."

"Administratively efficient."

"The Task force needs to keep addressing all asbestos issues that are out there for good health outcomes and problem solving to be achieved - we need to inform and educate the public to the dangers of asbestos and where it lurks and how to eradicate it from our society - this is a full time job and one that needs to continue for decades to see real change take place."

"Need to account for the impact of COVID and no ability for face to face - hard to gauge a lot of these questions e.g. interests/values if I don't know the person."



Latrobe Valley Asbestos Taskforce
71 Hotham Street, Traralgon VIC 3844
Tel: 03 5172 2111
www.asbestostaskforce.net

Contact: Kate Carmichael, Senior Program Manager
kate.carmichael@delwp.vic.gov.au

