


# CASE STUDY: PANEL FOR A CHALLENGING PLAN

---

 [mosaiclab.com.au/news-all-posts/2016/8/11/74wmvo880kq82uyf5x790gvhdclne0](https://mosaiclab.com.au/news-all-posts/2016/8/11/74wmvo880kq82uyf5x790gvhdclne0)



*IMAGE: The Spring Creek Valley on the Surf Coast. Photo: [The Surf Coast Shire](#).*

## THE PROJECT

---

MosaicLab was engaged by [Surf Coast Shire Council](#) to undertake the engagement for the development of a Precinct Structure Plan for the Spring Creek Valley in Torquay, Victoria.

“The process ensured we all had a chance to build the plan the way we wanted it. Everybody had the opportunity to feed in. We know there will still be people not happy but we achieved an enormous amount’

— Panel Member

---

## THE ISSUE

---

Designated as a ‘future investigation zone’ for potential growth in the local planning scheme for 30 years, the future of the Spring Creek Valley had been the subject of considerable controversy for some years.

A council attempt to undertake precinct planning in 2008 was abandoned in the face of 2,200 submissions and the vast majority of local people opposing the development (approximately 3,000 protesters descended on Council Offices in 2009 with support from

singer Xavier Rudd).

With a decision already made by State Government that the valley would be developed, the Council was the ultimate decision-maker when it came to the development of a precinct structure plan for the site.

---

## THE PROCESS

---

Due to the level of local interest, the potential for further and increased outrage, the history of the project and the passion the local community has for the environment, a robust, in-depth engagement process was required and a 'people's panel' was recruited to consider the issue. 50% of the panel members represented developers, landowners and local activists groups (stakeholders) and 50% represented general residents and ratepayers of Torquay, Jan Juc and Bellbrae.

A clear 'remit' or purpose was defined by Surf Coast Shire in collaboration with MosaicLab, helping to define the question being asked which was ***'how do we design urban growth that is in balance with the surrounding environment?'***.

The promise from SCS Council was ***'to give serious thought and consideration to all of the recommendations and make a formal response to the panel'***.

The panel met for three full days with a follow-up evening session to walk-through their final report. These three days included:

- a bus trip around the site,
  - discussion around issues and opportunities for the site,
  - hearing from speakers (of the panel's choosing) in urban growth planning, creating a community hub and environmental considerations and
  - deciding on key principles and recommendations for the development of the precinct structure plan.
- 

## SUCCESS FACTORS

---

To ensure the process succeeded, MosaicLab worked to ensure that:

- there was agreement with objectives while keeping the focus constantly coming back to what are they here to do),
  - there was a clear set of ground rules/commitment to how they work together,
  - there was clarity around levels of agreement and how decisions would be made,
  - an 80% 'super-majority' of panel members that could 'live with' a recommendation in their report for it to 'make it' into the report,
  - the report started from a blank page and the group wrote it collectively,
  - the panel presented their report directly to Council and council provided a special briefing to the panel on what was done with their report.
-

## OUTCOME.

---

95% of all recommendations of the panel were included in the draft Precinct Structure Plan for exhibition.

Today there are still approximately 10 key people unhappy with the outcome. This is significantly less than the original 3000 individuals who opposed the process and the front spokespeople for those opposing the plan are predominantly not panel members.

The Surf Coast Shire Council's response to the community panel's recommendations can be viewed [here](#).

## CLIENT INSIGHT

---

*"I didn't realise how important the media is in processes like this. The importance of ensuring the broader community can see and hear what is going on is key to creating greater ownership in the outcome."*

**- Kate Sullivan, General Manager, Environment and Development, Surf Coast Shire**

---

## FACILITATOR INSIGHT

---

*"Having all stakeholders (landowners, developers, activists and the general public) in the room and the same time ensures the process considers all the views and highlights the differing perspectives."\**

**- Nicole Hunter, Co-Founder MosaicLab**

---

## REFLECTIONS & KEY LEARNINGS

---

**From the facilitator - MosaicLab co-founder Nicole Hunter:**

This project was very successful, and worked well to move from outrage to collaboration. The community is pleased with the process and outcome, with one panel member stating that "the process was very good at clarifying what was acceptable to most if not all".

There are still some activists working to stop the development altogether, but they are far fewer in number and not generally the same people (at least in the forefront) as they were before.

---

## MORE INFORMATION

---

For more information on the Spring Creek Precinct Structure Plan head to [www.surfcoastconversations.com.au/spring-creek-precinct-structure-plan](http://www.surfcoastconversations.com.au/spring-creek-precinct-structure-plan)