

COUNCIL POLICY	
Reference Number	938924
Responsible Business Unit	Organisational Development
Responsible Officer	General Manager Corporate Services
Legislation	Local Government Act 1999
Relevant Delegations	Chief Executive Officer
Related Policies Management Guidelines Frameworks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Code of Conduct for Council Members • Code of Conduct for \$41 Independent Members • Code of Conduct for Council Volunteers • Code of Conduct for Employees • RCMB Caretaker Policy • RCMB Communication Policy • RCMB Social Media Policy • RCMB Media Policy • RCMB Records Management Policy • RCMB IT Policy • RCMB IT Internet, Email and Computer Use Policy • Accessing information – Freedom of Information Policy • Customer Service Charter • Community Engagement Framework • Communication Policy
Link to Strategic Plan	Objective 4.2 - Effective Communication
Council resolution	108.7
Date Adopted	14 June 2022
Review Date	2022
Previous Revisions	11 May 2020, item 72.2 (covid restrictions) 10 September 2018 - 163.5 10 August 2009 – 936.12 – Public Consultation & Engagement Policy 14 May 2007 – 133.1.3 16 June 2000 – 511.3.1

POLICY STATEMENT

The Policy outlines how Council will fulfil its commitment to create genuine and transparent opportunities to enable community members to provide feedback about matters of interest to them through Council's decision making process.

Council Administration recognise that a community engagement program involves the community through the provision of information or through shared problem solving, and uses community feedback to inform decisions that meet the current and future needs of the community.

Council will always engage the community where there is a legislated requirement to do so, but will also ensure the appropriate level of community engagement is applied to ensure informed decision making.

Council will assess the level of interest and impact a plan or project will have on the community to determine the level of engagement that will be undertaken and will consider community engagement when a proposed change or decision is likely to:

- impact on services or facilities for residents and/or ratepayers

- have a significant budgetary impact
- involve a level of conflict, controversy or sensitivity
- have significant impact on quality of life

OBJECTIVES

The objectives of the policy are to:

- support good decision-making by Council that takes into account the diverse needs of the local community
- undertake community engagement activities with respect, openness and accountability
- build a strong partnerships with our community

SCOPE

This policy applies to Council Members, staff, contractors and those consultants acting on behalf of Council to deliver Council's community engagement and consultation programs and activities.

The Chief Executive Officer is responsible for the implementation of the Community Consultation Policy, establishing the consultation level, reporting outcomes of the consultation to the Council, reviewing the value of the policy and determining elements of the process where Council has delegated responsibility.

The Communications Team coordinates the implementation, maintenance and review of community engagement activities ensuring Council staff are aware of their accountabilities. The Communications Team will bring expertise, influence and resources to support departments in the development and delivery of community engagement programs, as required.

All staff will be supported by the Communications Team in being accountable for this Policy.

PRINCIPLES

Council is committed to the following principles of open and effective engagement:

Good governance

Council is committed to engaging the community as a core component of good governance and effective decision making. It will seek to build increased confidence and trust with the community. Council will seek to improve community satisfaction through engagement which is timely and clear and open about its purpose and the level of input the community can have to decision making.

Council will avoid duplication or over-consultation through use of effective planning and engagement techniques.

Community feedback will be used to continuously improve the services Council provides.

Accessible and inclusive

Council will offer a variety of ways the community can be kept informed and have their say. Council will actively encourage the participation of community members who may be affected by, or are interested in a decision. The method of engagement will be appropriate to the project and the needs of the affected community.

Council will work with the community to encourage involvement in engagement, especially with children and young people, people of non-English speaking backgrounds, indigenous Australians and any other community members who need support in engaging.

Genuine Relationships

Council will build networks, use existing networks and develop engagement programs to strengthen our consultation activities.

IMPLEMENTATION

This Policy will be implemented by the Chief Executive Officer or relevant General Manager and managed in accordance with Council's delegations.

Community engagement is the responsibility of all Council staff as appropriate to their role and function. To ensure the effective application of community engagement a community engagement framework, tools, and templates have been developed to provide guidance for Council employees.

Council will apply community engagement methodologies appropriate to the circumstances and desired outcomes of any specific engagement.

Council Administration will regularly review the community engagement processes to ensure we deliver the best possible service and meet community expectations.

LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 1999 REQUIREMENTS

The followings sections of Local Government Act 1999 prescribe a public consultation requirement or make reference to Council's Community Consultation Policy:

- Access to documents (S.132(3))
- Access to meetings and documents - Code of Practice (S.92(5)(b))
- Alienation of community land by lease or licence (S.202(2))
- Amendment or revocation of management plan (S. 198 (2)(3))
- Annual business plans and budgets (S.123(3))
- Basis of differential rates (S.156(14a))
- Basis of rating (S.151(5))
- Composition and wards (S.12(7))
- Councils to develop policies (S.259(2))
- Passing by-laws (S.249(2))
- Preparation of stormwater management plans by councils (Schedule 1 (S. 13 (2b))
- Principal office (S.45(3))
- Prudential requirements for certain activities (S.48)
- Public consultation (S.223(1))
- Public consultation policies (S.50)
- Public consultation on proposed management plan (S.197(1))
- Revocation of classification of land as community land (S.194(2))
- Status of a council or change of various names (S.13(2))
- Strategic management plans (S.122(6))
- Trees (S.232(b))

In these instances Council must comply with the Act and/or follow the steps outlined in the Community Engagement Framework

Where there are legislative requirements for consultations under other legislation, for example the Public Infrastructure and Development Act then these take precedence over the Community Engagement Policy should there be any inconsistency.

DEFINITIONS

In this Policy, unless a specific contrary definition appears, these words have the following meaning:

Community includes individuals or groups who have an interest in Council's decision-making and who are affected by Council's decisions. These individuals or groups may be identified as residents and voters, ratepayers, business owners, Council customers, contractors or suppliers, community interest groups, agencies, visitors and hard to reach groups.

Stakeholders are recognised as organised groups who have an interest in Council's decision-making and who are affected by Council's decisions. Businesses, retail outlets, State and Federal Governments, community groups, Local Government and not for profit organisations are considered stakeholders. Stakeholders may also be groups or organisations who have a role to play in policy development and program or service delivery.

Engagement describes different levels of participation in our decision-making processes.

Community Consultation is a planned process of engagement where information is provided and community and stakeholders are formally invited, as per the relevant requirements in the Act, to comment about matters on which Council will deliberate.