



POLICY NO	CP GOV-3100	
POLICY	Community Engagement Policy	
RESPONSIBLE DIRECTORATE	Planning and Community Development	
RESPONSIBLE OFFICER	Senior Projects Officer	
COUNCIL ADOPTION	Date: 20/09/2011	Resolution No: 9575
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REVIEW DUE	Date: November 2024	
LEGISLATION	<i>Local Government (Administration) Regulations 1996</i>	
RELATED POLICIES	CP/COM - 3580 Community Development; CP/GOV - 3102 Media & Corporate Communications	
RELATED DOCUMENTS	Community Engagement Guidelines	

PURPOSE:

This Policy will guide the delivery of Community Engagement across the organisation to inform decision-making, build relationships and strengthen community outcomes.

STRATEGIC CONTEXT

This Policy relates to the following sections of the Strategic Community Plan 2017-2027:

Focus Area 4: PERFORMANCE - Civic Leadership

Goal 4.2: Good decision making through engagement with the community

Strategy 4.2.1: Engage and communicate with all sections of the community to better understand needs and priorities

Strategy 4.2.2: Ensure community input informs planning and decision making

DEFINITIONS:

Stakeholder is any individual, group of individuals, or organisation with an interest or stake in the outcome of the decision.

Community includes individuals or groups who live, work, play, study, visit or invest in the local government area.

Community Engagement is any process that involves the community in problem-solving or decision-making and that uses the input to make better decisions.

IAP2 is the International Association for Public Participation which is an international organisation advancing the practice of community engagement and public participation.

POLICY STATEMENTS:

The Shire is committed to engaging meaningfully with the community and recognises the need to continue to integrate, in a meaningful way, the knowledge and opinions of the community into its decision-making processes. This is important in building relationships and enhancing community capacity, which in turn ensures that Council and Shire decisions are well informed.

The Shire places high priority on undertaking best practice community engagement which provides Stakeholders and community with the opportunity to participate in decision making processes at the appropriate level. Different levels of engagement will be appropriate depending on the issue, stakeholders, and the information to be relayed or obtained.

The Shire's engagement objectives are:

- Allow for informed decision-making to collectively achieve an improved quality of life in the Shire.
- Maintain good governance by facilitating open, honest and timely engagement with stakeholders and the community on programs, projects and initiatives that may impact them; and
- Provide greater awareness of Council decisions and community aspirations surrounding programs, projects and initiatives

The following principles guide the Shire in achieving its engagement objectives:

- encourage broad stakeholder representation;
- minimise barriers to participation by considering people's different needs;
- clearly state the purpose of engagement activities and any associated limitations or constraints;
- make relevant information readily available, accurate and easy to understand;
- allow sufficient time and opportunity for stakeholders to participate;
- listen to stakeholders and provide feedback about how the information gathered is to be used to inform the outcome; and
- allocate appropriate resourcing for the development and implementation of effective and efficient engagement.

APPLICATION

Community Engagement is the responsibility of everyone acting on behalf of the Shire. This Policy, therefore, applies to the whole organisation.

The Shire will maintain Guidelines as a resource to assist officers to determine appropriate Community Engagement levels, tools, plans and processes for their projects to ensure that Community Engagement and participation becomes integral to the Shire's projects, operations and activities. The level of engagement and methods selected by the Shire will be based on the IAP2 Spectrum set out in the Community Engagement Guidelines.

The Shire will develop plans to inform engagement with specific groups such as the Disability Access and Inclusion Plan and Aboriginal Engagement Plan.

EXPLANATORY NOTES:

The Shire's engagement approach reflects the principles set out in the IAP2 Code of Ethics (set out in the Community Engagement Guidelines). The Shire consider this best practice in Community Engagement.

RISK:

Risk: Failure to undertake effective community engagement strategies which develop the Shire's understanding of the needs and aspirations of the community, grow community capacity and ensure supportable outcomes are reached with stakeholders.

Control: The Shire will maintain community engagement guidelines as a resource to assist officers to determine the minimum level of community engagement and appropriate methods of engagement.