

COUNCIL POLICY COMD/CP-3 COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT FRAMEWORK



1. OBJECTIVE

- 1.1. The object of this policy is to provide a framework to embed proactive stakeholder analysis, communication and engagement planning and delivery for Shire projects, services, and issues management.

2. SCOPE

- 2.1. The Shire is committed to providing opportunities for members of the community to participate in, and contribute to, local decision-making processes. This policy recognises that the Shire community is a source of knowledge and expertise and this is accessed to help find solutions to local issues as well as complex shire challenges.

3. DEFINITIONS

- 3.1. **Stakeholder** is any person, group, business, organisation or interested party (internal and external) who can impact, or is impacted by, a decision or activity.
- 3.2. **Communication** is a one-way information sharing process to keep stakeholders informed, advised, and educated, mostly after a decision is made or around project milestone. Communication tools include, but are not limited to, advertisements, letters, newsletters, brochures, website, phone calls, emails, media, social media, signage, displays, drawings, and models.
- 3.3. **Consultation** is a two-way information exchange process that enables stakeholders to give feedback, on a topic or issue so these can be considered before making a decision. Consultation tools include, but are not limited to, verbal discussions, written submissions, surveys, group meetings, workshops, displays, public events, and formal advisory committees. Consultation provides opportunities to clarify information, raise and address issues and discuss ideas and options.
- 3.4. **Level of engagement** refers to any one of five levels of engagement (inform, consult, involve, collaborate, empower) defined by the International Association of Public Participation (IAP2) Public Participation Spectrum to describe the community's role in any engagement programme. A complete description of the IAP2 Public Participation Spectrum can be found online at www.iap2.org
- 3.5. **Engagement** is any process that allows stakeholders to participate more deeply in problem solving or decision making which proactively uses their input to develop or formulate outcomes and make decisions. A thorough engagement process reaches mutually beneficial outcomes, as a result of effective relationship-building over a longer period of time (lifespan of a project or issue). Outcomes are heavily shaped by input from participants above simply considering feedback.

4. POLICY STATEMENT

Active community participation in the Shire's decision-making processes

4.1. The Shire has various strategies to guide its decision-making; consultation and engagement with the community is an integral strategy in decision-making.

4.2. The Shire will:

- a. Carefully plan engagement design and who to involve;
- b. Work in partnership with Aboriginal people, where possible;
- c. Prioritise accessible, diverse, and inclusive engagement;
- d. Consult early and clearly communicate the community's role throughout engagement;
- e. Communicate clearly when there are time constraints imposed by third parties;
- f. Deliver engagement approaches that are relevant to complexity, context, and place;
- g. Be innovative and always improve our engagement approach;
- h. Not engage when it is not effective or appropriate; and
- i. Adhere to its statutory obligations to consult.

4.3. The Community Engagement Framework complements the *Shire of Donnybrook Balingup Strategic Community Plan*. All methods of engagement will be guided by the Shire's overarching vision of '*a proud community enjoying our rural lifestyle, cultural heritage and natural environment*'.

Keeping Elected Members and staff informed

4.4. The complexity of the engagement and the scope of the issue or project to be consulted on will guide the involvement of Elected Members. If the issue or project scope has a high level of impact on a large part of the Shire, or a high degree of potential community interest in a specific local area that involves the Community Engagement plan that directs the Shire to involve, collaborate, or empower the community, then the Elected Members must approve the plan prior to engagement occurring.

4.5. Elected Members and staff are encouraged to act as a communication medium to help inform the community of key activities. Elected Members and staff must also be considered as internal stakeholders, where appropriate, when developing a Community Engagement plan, including being invited to attend public consultation opportunities, and be provided with any supporting information prior to or at the same time as invitations and communications are shared with the community.

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Integration of community engagement with key Shire processes and corporate documents

4.6. Integral to effective community engagement is the development of a Community Engagement plan that uses a suite of planning tools and templates. These planning tools assist in developing a stakeholder analysis and identify the most appropriate community engagement techniques to be used. All community engagement activity should form part of a Project Plan approved by the Shire's Executive team and connected to key Shire governance processes and statutory obligations.

Community engagement framework procedures

4.7. The community engagement framework is detailed in the Community Engagement Framework Operational Procedure. Community engagement is subject to continuous improvement as techniques for engagement are applied in different circumstances and communities of interest.

5. LEGISLATION

- 5.1. *Local Government Act 1995*
- 5.2. *Land Administration Act 1997*
- 5.3. *Dog Act 1976*
- 5.4. *Bush Fires Act 1954*

6. POLICY VERSION

Related Policies:	N/A		
Related Procedure:	Community Engagement Framework Operational Procedure		
Responsible Department:	Community Development		
Reviewer:	Manager of Community Development		
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