

Policy

Community Engagement

Responsible Manager (Title)	Manager Communications and Engagement		
Adopted by Council	Date: TBA	Minute Number:	
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Community Plan Linkage	5 Leadership		
	5.1 We will have a strong, accountable and representative government		
	5.1.4 Ensures transparent accountable decision making for our community		

1 Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to outline Council's approach to engaging with the community.

The Community Engagement Policy, alongside the Community Engagement Strategy (with Community Participation Plan), provides the direction for how Council and the community work together to create effective and ongoing partnerships to guide Council decision making.

2 Definitions

Community: all residents, ratepayers, visitors, businesses, government, and other organisations of Clarence Valley.

Community engagement: a planned process whereby Council and the community exchange information through different methods.

Officer: an employee of Clarence Valley Council.

Stakeholder: an individual or group of individuals with an interest in a specific topic.

3 Background/legislative requirements

Under the *Local Government Act 1993*, the Integrated Planning and Reporting (IP&R) Framework guides NSW councils in the development of a Community Engagement Strategy including roles and responsibilities. A Community Engagement Strategy is prepared at the beginning of each new council term to inform the development of other IP&R documents.

The *Local Government Act 1993* also sets out minimum requirements for public notification of classification of public land, plans of management, local policy, boundaries, codes, financial reports and fees and charges.

The *Environmental Planning and Assessment Act 1979* set out the relevant requirements for councils when considering and determining planning matters.

The *Roads Act 1993* sets out minimum requirements for public notification when closing or renaming public roads.

Community engagement is an important tool to guide the decisions of a council, however it does not override relevant legislation or replace the decision-making powers of local government.

4 Policy statement

Effective and meaningful engagement is at the heart of local government and the IP&R process. It helps communities shape their futures and informs the vision and direction of council.

In delivering community engagement, Council will follow the following principles.

Social justice principles:

- equity
- participation
- access
- rights.

Community engagement principles:

- open, honest and transparent
- effective and ongoing partnerships
- right to be informed
- consult with people impacted
- appropriate level of engagement
- timely
- plain language and easily accessible
- inclusive and representative.

5 Procedures

The Community Engagement Strategy with Community Participation Plan outlines Council's approach to engaging with the community and establishes a minimum level of engagement to meet the expectations of the community.

Council is guided by relevant legislation and the International Association of Public Participation (IAP2) best practice tools for community engagement. This includes the adoption of the IAP2 Public Participation Spectrum which provides a methodology in determining what level of engagement is appropriate.

An internal Community Engagement Toolkit provides resources and tools for Council Officer and Consultants to follow in designing, planning, implementing and reviewing community engagement activities.

6 Roles and responsibilities

Role	Responsibilities
Mayor	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Act as the spokesperson for the council to promote engagement on key strategic plans including developing the Community Strategic Plan (CSP). • Together with the General Manager, ensure adequate opportunities and mechanisms for engagement between council and the local community.

Role	Responsibilities
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Promote partnerships between council and key stakeholders.
Mayor and Councillors (elected representatives)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Promote engagement on key strategic plans including supporting and participating in community engagement for the development of CSP. Participate in the development of IP&R component documents, including the CSP. As members of the elected body, endorse the CSP on behalf of the community and approve the remaining component IP&R documents.
General Manager	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Oversee preparation of the Community Engagement Strategy and IP&R component documents and endorsement by the elected council. Ensure that community members are given enough information to participate in the IP&R process in a meaningful way.
Staff	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Work with and support the general manager in the development of the strategy and plans to engage the community. Implement the engagement strategy and provide timely advice to the general manager on community views.

Source: Integrated Planning and Reporting Handbook – September 2021.