

## Community Engagement Procedure

Policy Type	Administrative Procedure	Version:	1.0
Responsible Officer	Glenys Pilat	Date Approved:	Dec 2020
Review Officer:	Glenys Pilat	Review Due:	Dec 2024
Author:	Glenys Pilat	Commencement:	Dec 2020

### 1. PURPOSE

The purpose of this Procedure is to outline the framework for consistent and well-coordinated best practice community engagement in accordance with the intentions outlined in the *Community Engagement Policy*.

### 2. SCOPE

The Procedure applies across all Councillors, all employees and to all consultants engaged by Council and to all facets of Council's community engagement activities.

Community consultation that is prescribed under legislation is outside of the scope of this Procedure. However, where the legislation does not prescribe how community consultation should be undertaken that engagement is within the scope of the Procedure.

### 3. PROCEDURE STATEMENT

The *Community Engagement Procedure* sets out the key methodological principles and the roles and responsibilities that are intended to inform and guide work practices of all staff and elected representatives.

#### 3.1 IAP2 PUBLIC PARTICIPATION SPECTRUM

Council will use the International Association for Public Participation (IAP2), Public Participation Spectrum which defines five levels of community participation with increasing community impact on decision-making. This framework recognises that differing levels of community participation are appropriate depending on the goals, timeframes, resources and level of concern in the decision to be made. The Spectrum helps to define the role of the community in engagement activities and sets out the commitment being made to the public.

Community engagement may involve one of five levels of public participation:

**1. Inform** - Provide balanced and objective information to assist the community to understand the problem, alternatives, solutions and decisions. Example methodologies include fact sheets, press releases, website information, social media posts, Council representatives attending community network meetings.

**2. Consult** - Listen and acknowledge the concerns of the community by obtaining public feedback on analysis, drafts, proposals and decisions. Example methodologies include public comment, surveys, public meetings, interviews.

#### Human Rights Compatibility Statement

The *Human Rights Act 2019* (HR Act) (Qld) came into effect on 1 January 2020 and will mean fairer laws, policies and practices by public entities when dealing with the community on a day-to-day basis. This procedure has been drafted in alignment with obligations under s 58 of the HR Act.

**3. Involve** - Work with the community throughout the decision-making process to ensure public concerns and aspirations are consistently understood and considered and reflected in the alternatives developed. Example methodologies include interactive workshops, community visioning, focus groups and open forums.

**4. Collaborate** - Partner with the community throughout the decision-making process to share the responsibility for understanding the issue, development of alternatives and identification of the preferred solution. Example methodologies include community advisory committees, community response groups for big issues, reference groups, participatory decision-making activities.

**5. Empower** - All final decisions rest with Council or a delegated officer of Council. However, Council may adopt recommendations from the community, unchanged, should circumstances warrant such an approach or delegate decision-making to a suitable body such as a Council Advisory Group as appropriate.

## **3.2 INFORMING**

### **3.2.1 Public Communications**

Communicating to inform members of the public about Council business, such as a Council decision, planned works or change in policy is the most common type of community engagement Council undertakes. It generally involves providing information to targeted stakeholders, groups or communities by way of a mailout, group email, flyer or letter box drop, and these are usually prepared by the Officer responsible for the issue or project about which the public is to be informed.

These communications do not require or provide any opportunity for community comment or input they are about making sure the community or group affected by a Council decision or planned works knows about it and understands the reasons for it.

### **3.2.2 Roles and Responsibilities**

For matters where Council is communicating to inform the community, group or targeted stakeholders, the responsible Officer must refer the proposed communication to the Corporate Communications Officer for content review and coordination prior to distribution. Sufficient time of at least three working days' notice should be provided for the review by the Corporate Communications Officer.

The responsible Officer must notify the Coordinator Customer Service of any public communications so they can respond to customer enquiries in an informed and professional manner.

## **3.3 OTHER COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT**

### **3.3.1 Higher Level of Public Participation**

For Council business requiring community consultation, involvement, collaboration or empowerment, the following procedures apply.

### **3.3.2 Roles and Responsibilities**

- It is the responsibility of all Council employees to consider the need for community engagement.
- Once the need for community engagement has been identified, the responsible Officer is to notify the Manager Community Wellbeing. Notification is required for good coordination and team work so that the community is not overloaded with engagement at the same time and to ensure best practice community engagement with the Community Wellbeing Group reviewing engagement plans and monitoring their implementation.
- The Department responsible for the project or issue requiring community engagement 'owns' the community engagement plan and is responsible for allocating appropriate staff, time and other resources for implementation once the engagement plan has been endorsed by EMT and Councillors.

- 
- Officers responsible for the community engagement project will be coached and supported by the Community Wellbeing Group who will provide advice on community engagement planning and assist with or manage the implementation of community engagement plans as appropriate and as negotiated with the Manager Community Wellbeing. Where community engagement activities are complex or significant, it is expected the Community Wellbeing Group will play an active role in assisting with designing and implementing the engagement plan.
  - The Community Wellbeing Group will assist the responsible Officer to prepare a community engagement plan, including but not limited to: engagement purpose, scope, stakeholders, level of public engagement, engagement strategies, data collection and analysis, resources and budget, and other implementation tasks including how the community will be informed of the outcome of community engagement. A Community Engagement Plan template will be made available.
  - Council's engagement activities will be informed by the IAP2 Public Participation Spectrum and will vary depending on the potential level of community influence on the decision, subject matter and those involved, potential legislative requirements, and budget, timeframes and other resource implications.
  - The responsible Officer must notify the Coordinator Customer Service of any community engagement so Customer Service Officers can respond to customer enquiries in an informed and professional manner.

### **3.3.3 Advisory Committee to Council**

The appointment of an Advisory Committee is a mechanism by which the substantive work involved in investigating, reporting on and formulating decisions with respect to particular issues can be delegated to a select group of people. The appointment of community members to an Advisory Committee also enables Council to access additional information, experience and expertise and ensure that community needs and wishes are considered. Council's *Handbook for Advisory Committees* provides further details.

If there is a need to establish a new Advisory Committee to Council, then the Manager Community Wellbeing is to be informed for assistance with terms of reference and recruitment and induction of new members.

## **4. REPORTING**

---

No additional reporting is required.

## **5. DEFINITIONS**

---

Definitions are needed to explain the terminology used in the procedure.

## **6. RELATED DOCUMENTS AND REFERENCES**

---

Mareeba Shire Council Community Engagement Policy.  
Mareeba Shire Council Handbook for Advisory Committees.  
International Association for Public Participation (IAP2). 2015. Quality Assurance Standards for Community Engagement and Stakeholder Engagement.

## **7. REVIEW**

---

It is the responsibility of the Manager Community Wellbeing to monitor the adequacy of this procedure and implement and approve appropriate changes. This procedure will be formally reviewed every four (4) years or as required by Council.