

ITEM 13 POLICY REVIEW: COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT POLICY 2018

The Community Engagement Policy is Council's commitment to engage with the community. This report seeks Council's adoption for the draft Community Engagement Policy 2018.

RECOMMENDATION

Council adopt the amended Community Engagement Policy.

REPORT AUTHORISATIONS

Report of: Kerry Hunt, Manager Community Cultural and Economic Development

Authorised by: Greg Doyle, General Manager (Acting)

ATTACHMENTS

- 1 "We Asked, You Said, We Did"
- 2 Community Engagement Report for the Draft Community Engagement Policy
- 3 Draft Community Engagement Policy for Adoption July 2018
- 4 Community Engagement Policy adopted in 2013
- 5 Draft Community Engagement Policy 2018 - Exhibited in May 2018

BACKGROUND

The Community Engagement Policy is reviewed in each new Council term. The policy was last reviewed in 2013. Following Council endorsement, the draft Community Engagement Policy 2018 was exhibited from 10 May to 4 June 2018. The draft policy incorporated findings from benchmarking and industry changes, internal engagement, Councillor feedback, feedback from key stakeholders, children and young people and the results of the Community Satisfaction Survey 2017.

PROPOSAL

A range of communication and engagement methods were implemented to gain feedback from the community about the draft policy. This included use of an animated video detailing what community engagement is and hosting 'Cuppa and a Chat' discussions. Internal opportunities included workshops, lunch and learn sessions and surveys.

The feedback received from submissions, surveys, workshops and discussions was compiled and considered. Key changes have been made to the draft policy in response to the feedback received.

The language has been made simpler so it is accessible by various literacy levels. The terminology has been explained and repetitive sections of the policy have been refined, for example the introduction and definition of community engagement. The graphics have been linked to the text and the typos addressed.

The policy is a high level document; however participants requested more details about the 'how' of engagement. While this level of detail lives in individual communications and engagement strategies changes were made to the 'Levels of Engagement' table.

Our commitment to keeping the community informed about how their feedback was used has also been strengthened in the draft policy. This will also be incorporated into ongoing practice.

Feedback was also received on increasing accessibility of engagement opportunities, increasing awareness, increasing accountability, increasing collaboration opportunities and creating a register of interest. This feedback sits outside of the draft policy however will inform our practice into the future. Additionally, through discussions with Neighbourhood Forums it was identified that many people do not know how to raise concerns about development applications or the role of Independent Hearing and Assessment Panel (IHAP) and Joint Regional Planning Panel (JRPP) in the process. It was

recommended a community education kit would assist to fill this gap and a project will be undertaken to develop the kit to address this issue.

CONSULTATION AND COMMUNICATION

A communication and engagement strategy was developed for the public exhibition of the draft Community Engagement Policy. Council staff provided information to Neighbourhood Forum meetings and reference groups scheduled during the exhibition period. Information on the draft policy was available at all Council Libraries and widely promoted throughout the period. Our online platform, Have Your Say, was utilised throughout the exhibition period to obtain feedback together with promotion via social media. Workshops were held with children, young people and Neighbourhood Forums and ‘cuppa and a chat’ session held with broader interested community members. Internal engagement opportunities included workshops, lunch and learn sessions and surveys.

PLANNING AND POLICY IMPACT

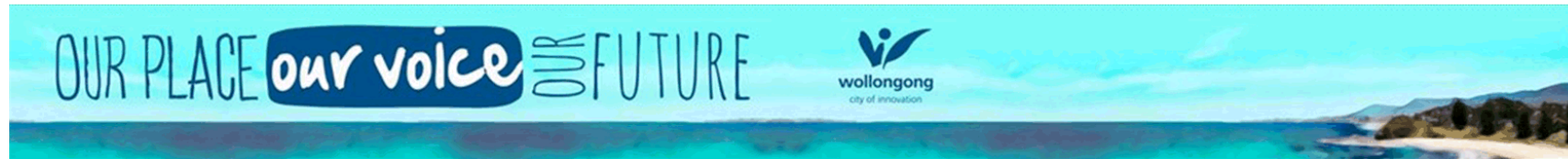
This report contributes to the delivery of Our Wollongong 2028 goal. It specifically delivers on the following:

Community Strategic Plan	Delivery Program 2018-2021	Operational Plan 2018-19
Strategy	3 Year Action	Operational Plan Actions
4.1.1 Provide residents with equitable access to information and opportunities to inform decision making.	4.1.1.1 Ensure an effective community engagement framework that connects the community to Council decision making	Deliver a diverse range of community engagement opportunities to inform and guide development and delivery of Council business

CONCLUSION

The draft Community Engagement Policy 2018 is Council’s commitment to engage with the community. When adopted, it will apply to Councillors, staff, contractors and consultants. This draft policy has been prepared following a review of benchmarking and industry changes, research, targeted engagement and data analysis.

The community was provided an opportunity to provide feedback. This feedback has been used to inform a revised draft policy for Council to consider for adoption.



We asked... for your feedback on the draft Community Engagement Policy



You said...

Use plain language

The language needs to be simpler so people with different literacy levels can understand it. Terminology should be explained and some parts of the Policy are repetitive and should be condensed. The graphics are great, but need to be linked to the text. There are some typos.

Make engagement accessible

Everyone should have the opportunity to participate – use different methods to make this happen. People don't know they can voice their opinion, there needs to be more promotion such as social media and in libraries. Create an opt-in email that people can register to be notified about opportunities to have their say.

Include more details about the 'how'

Include more about 'how' engagement will happen, how people can participate, what methods will be used and balance online with face to face opportunities. How are stakeholders identified? There should be a greater focus on collaboration and involving people in the planning phase. Also, objectives need to be clearly identified and the community only engaged when a decision can be influenced.

Increased accountability

Transparency is valued. The community should have access to more information such as minutes of reference groups and details of meetings Councillors attend. There appears to be no consequence if the Policy is not followed.

Let us know how our feedback is used

Be clear on how feedback is used and provide responses to feedback. Council staff reporting back to Neighbourhood Forums is valued. The 'We asked, You said, We did' concept is great.

We did...



The draft Policy has been revised

We value everyone's involvement and have simplified the language and explained the terminology used. We have condensed the repetitive sections and linked the graphic to the text. We have also sorted out the typos.

We will continue to use new strategies

We are committed to making engagement accessible. This new, friendlier approach Policy is just one example. We will continue to try new methods for engaging and promoting. We will develop a 'Register of Interest' which allows community members to opt in to be notified of opportunities to have their say on topics that interest them.

We have revised the Levels of Engagement table

The Policy is a high level document; the 'how' of engagement, including methods and identified stakeholders, lives in individual Communications and Engagement Strategies. This allows us to be responsive to the needs of individual projects. We have revised the 'Levels of Engagement' table. We will focus on making engagement meaningful and our objectives clearer.

We will increase accountability

The minutes of Reference Groups, Neighbourhood Forums and Council Meetings are available on our website. We will continue to train staff in engagement techniques and analysis of community feedback will be peer reviewed.

We will let you know how your feedback is used

We will continue to attend Neighbourhood Forums when relevant. We will let you know how your feedback was used and create 'We asked, You said, We did' summaries (like this one) to share engagement outcomes with you.



Community Engagement Policy Review

ENGAGEMENT REPORT

June 2018

Z18/123323

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Executive Summary

In April 2013, Council adopted the existing Community Engagement Policy. With the Policy due for review in 2018, an engagement process was undertaken to ensure the Policy was reflective of contemporary best practice and our community's engagement needs.

Prior to the draft Policy being exhibited a survey was distributed to the Lord Mayor and Councillors inviting their feedback. Workshops were held with 21 Council staff, 5 Neighbourhood Forum Convenors and 84 children and young people. The data from these activities was used to inform the draft Policy.

The draft Policy was exhibited from 2 May – 4 June 2018. An animated video was developed as a tool to provide user friendly information to explain community engagement. An email was distributed to 4064 people registered on Council's Have Your Say page plus key advisory groups and Neighbourhood Forums. Details about the Policy and an online version of the Feedback Form (Appendix 3) were made available on the Have Your Say page, all Wollongong City Library Branches and via Council's Customer Service team.

Information was distributed to relevant local media outlets (Appendix 5). There were nine social media postings regarding the Policy review exhibition on Council's Twitter, Facebook and Instagram channels (Appendix 4).

Engagement activities during the exhibition included two Lunch and learn sessions with 25 Council staff, a Cuppa and a Chat session at Diggies and use of our online engagement platform.

The total number of submissions received during the exhibition period was 39, with 34 submissions via the Have Your Say website feedback survey and 5 email submissions. In addition, four community members participated in the Cuppa and a Chat discussion, held on 25 May 2018 (Appendix 7).

Comment and opinion from the community offered considerable support for the Policy in general. Suggestions for improvement included use of simpler language with less jargon and a better link between graphics and text. Recommendations were made to shift focus to collaborate rather than inform, and listening and acting on what the community has said. Areas of concern included accountability with suggestions that there is no measure of whether the Policy is being followed and no consequences as a result.

There was also interest in the process of engagement and how the Policy would be implemented in real terms. There were questions on how engagement specifically works and what happens with results.

Background

The current Community Engagement Policy, adopted in 2013, is due for review.

Benchmarking of other community engagement policies from councils across Australia was conducted in March 2018, to inform the preparation of a draft Policy for exhibition. Benchmarking focused on factors including document length, accessibility of language, the use of the IAP2 Spectrum of Public Participation or other frameworks, the inclusion of case studies, photos and graphics, layout and formatting, values and principles, actionable measures, and the role of Councillors and of the Engagement team.

Feedback received from Councillors, Council staff, Neighbourhood Forum Convenors, children and young people was used to inform the draft Policy exhibited.

Stakeholders

Stakeholders identified before the start of the engagement period included:

- Lord Mayor and Councillors
- Council Staff
- Neighbourhood Forums
- Stakeholders who had previously participated in an engagement process via Council’s Have Your Say website
- Children and young people
- General community

Methodology

The following section outlines the various activities undertaken during the engagement period, held from 2 May 2018 – 4 June 2018. The engagement strategy identified a number of target audiences, leading to a variety of communication techniques being used, which is summarised in Table 1 below.

Table 1: Communications and Engagement Methods

Communication Methods	Stakeholders
Information Pack (see Appendices 3-4) Distributed to all Wollongong City Library Branches	Residents
Animated video A video was developed that explained what community engagement is, It was available on Council’s Have Your Say page and social media (https://youtu.be/QPg2if3Ru8k)	All stakeholders
Email (previously engaged stakeholders) Stakeholders registered on Council’s Have Your Say website were emailed, inviting them to view the draft Community Engagement Policy and complete the	Previously engaged stakeholders

online survey. The email was sent to 4046 registered users, successfully delivered to 3765 users (93.1%), with 2047 unique opens (50.6%) and 494 unique clicks (12.2%).	
Email (Neighbourhood Forums) Neighbourhood Forums were contacted via email, inviting them to view the draft Community Engagement Policy and complete the online survey.	Neighbourhood Forums
Website The exhibition was displayed on Council’s home page and the Have Your Say Wollongong website.	All stakeholders
Social media There were nine social media postings (Appendix 3) regarding the Community Engagement Policy Review exhibition on Council’s Twitter feed (7, 10 (twice), 15, 17, 24 and 30 May), one post on Council’s Facebook page (10 May) and one post on Council’s Instagram feed (10 May).	All stakeholders
Engagement Methods – to draft the Policy	Stakeholders
Councillor Survey A survey was distributed to the Lord Mayor and Councillor’s to provide feedback on the draft Policy	Lord Mayor and Councillors
Neighbourhood Forums Convenors Workshop All Neighbourhood Forum convenors were invited to a workshop on 23 April 2018 regarding the draft Policy	Neighbourhood Forums
Children and Young People Workshops Workshops were held with Cringila and Figtree Heights Public Schools and Bulli High School to inform the draft Policy	Children and young people
Internal focus groups Two focus groups were held with key internal stakeholders to help inform the draft Policy	Council staff
Engagement Methods – during exhibition of the draft Policy	Stakeholders
Lunch and Learn Lunch and Learn sessions were held with Council staff to raise awareness and seek input on the draft Policy	Council staff
Online Engagement All relevant documents were available via Council’s engagement website	All stakeholders
Cuppa and a Chat A Cuppa and a Chat session was held on 24 May at Diggies Cafe, North Beach as an opportunity for community members to learn more about engagement and the draft Policy review	All stakeholders

Results

Participation Results

This section provides details on the participation in engagement activities (Table 2), the online participation summary (Table 3) and the feedback received regarding the draft Policy.

Engagement Activity Results

Details of the number of participants for each engagement activity and the number of submissions received are presented in Table 2.

Table 2: Engagement participation results

Engagement activity	Participation
Pre-exhibition	
Children and Young People Workshops	84
Internal Focus Groups	21
Neighbourhood Forums Convenors Workshop	5
Council Survey	1
During the exhibition	
Submissions received	39
Lunch and Learn sessions	25
Cuppa and a Chat	4

Online Engagement Results

Table 3 presents the usage statistics for the project page on Council's Have Your Say Wollongong website.

Table 3: Summary of online participation

Measure and Explanation	Usage
Unique Site Visits – Total number of visits to the project page	966
Aware – Total number of users who viewed the project page	558
Informed – Total number of users who opened a hyperlink or read a document	481
Engaged – Total number of users who have actively contributed to the project via the project page	34

Feedback results

Feedback was collated from all engagement activities and submissions. The following provides a summary of the key themes. Detailed feedback results are presented based on engagement methods, at Appendix 1.

Summary of feedback

Comment and opinion from the community offered considerable support for the Policy in general. Suggestions for improvement included use of simpler language with less jargon and a better link between graphics and text. Recommendations were made to shift focus to collaborate rather than inform, and listening and acting on what the community has said. Areas of concern included accountability with suggestions that there is no measure of whether the Policy is being followed and no consequences as a result.

There was also interest in the process of engagement and how the Policy would be implemented in real terms. There were questions on how engagement specifically works and what happens with results.

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Make engagement accessible

Everyone should have the opportunity to participate and different methods should be used to make this happen. People don't know they can voice their opinion, there needs to be more promotion such as social media and in libraries. Create an opt-in email that people can register to be notified about opportunities to have their say.

Include more details about the 'how'

Include more about 'how' engagement will happen, how people can participate, what methods will be used and balance online with face to face opportunities. How are stakeholders identified? There should be a greater focus on collaboration and involving people in the planning phase. Also, objectives need to be clearly identified and the community only engaged when a decision can be influenced.

Increased accountability

Transparency is valued. The community should have access to more information such as minutes of reference groups and details of meetings Councillors attend. There appears to be no consequence if the Policy is not followed.

Let us know how our feedback is used

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Appendix 1: Feedback results received through each engagement methods

Online Submission Results

Community members were asked to provide feedback by way of an online survey. The survey consisted of ten question seeking feedback on specific sections of the draft Policy, followed by a final question for any general comments or feedback. Online feedback came from 34 submissions.

Table 4: Feedback regarding description of community engagement

Is this a clear description of what community engagement is? (34 responses)		
Yes = 33	No = 1	
Is there anything we should clarify in our description of what community engagement is? (13 responses)		
Theme	Comments	No. of responses
How	What are community engagement processes?	1
Language	A brief statement describing why it is important.	3
	No Policy on community engagement to listen to the needs of the Community and acting on it	
	Something about Council listening to the community	
How and Who	Specifically how engagement and feedback will work.	2
	The how and who is light on	
Terminology	Perhaps something like "it is about informing the community and asking them to help inform decisions...."	1
Majority	Need to go with majority opinions	1
Increase collaboration	Moving council - officers and councillors, from mainly "Inform" towards and eventually predominantly "Involve" and "Collaborate"	2
	Encourage involvement at development stage of plans and policies	
Feedback	Maybe use the word "feedback" in the description	1
Concise	Could this be condensed?	1

Table 5 – Feedback regarding the Policy wording about commitment

Does our commitment meet your expectations? (33 responses)		
Yes = 27	No = 6	
Can you tell us more about why our commitment does not meet your expectations? (N=7 responses)		
Theme	Comments	No. of responses
Implementation	There are no consequences for commitments not being met	2
	It's the putting things into practice that leaves a lot to be desired	
Accountability	Plenty of examples of where community involvement has been given lip service	1
Transparency	There is no transparency...These groups have no public visibility (minutes, agenda, public input, group members).	1
Lack of detail	No details. Just motherhood statements.	1
Feedback loop	No follow up response from WCC	1
Majority	These have been ignored and pandered to a minority.	1

Table 6 - Feedback regarding the Policy wording about principles

Do you agree with our principles for open and effective engagement? (3 responses)		
Yes = 27	No = 3	Unsure = 4
What do you disagree with in our principles? (N=4 responses)		
Theme	Comments	No. of responses
Monitoring	No inclusion of a measure to monitor effectiveness	1
Feedback	No. Responses have been put on the "never never".	1
Accessibility	These people are too busy to have a voice.	1
What are you unsure about in our principles? (4 responses)		
Theme	Comments	No. of responses
Accessibility	Needs to accommodate working class people.	1
IAP2 Levels	Less fuzzy if align with IAP2 'consultation' levels	1
Decision making	Councillors are decision-makers/ Policy setters	2
	I would like to see the WCC being impartial	

Relevance	"avoid duplication or over-consultation" ... unnecessary words	1
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Table 7 - Feedback regarding the Policy wording about the role of Councillor's and Council staff

We set out the role of Councillors and Council staff. Is what we say clear? Have we missed anything? (27 responses)		
Theme	Comments	No. of responses
All clear	The role of Councillors and Council staff was clear and/or nothing to add.	13
Implementation	The piece that is missing for me, is everything to do with implementation.	1
Accountability	Would like to see more accountability by Councillors	4
	Is of little use if nobody monitors and supports the decisions	
	Accountability of the Councillors... they have to return calls	
	What check is there that policies are being met in reality?	
How	No indication ... how a person can or should object.	1
Respect	No some of the interaction has been condescending	2
	Just a bit about respectful interactions	
Attendance at meetings and events	Councillors should be required to attend community engagement events as part of their role.	2
	No Ward meetings with the elected 4 Councillors.	
^ collaboration	Little wording focusing on the "Collaborate"	1
Plain language	Many people...are not aware of Local Government Charter (section B)	1

Table 8 - Feedback regarding the Policy wording about decision making

Do you understand the factors influencing Council's decision making? (34 responses)		
Yes = 33	No = 1	
What is unclear about how Council makes decisions? (1 responses)		
Theme	Comments	No. of responses
Graphics	No indication in the above diagram about the weight[ing]	1

Table 9 – General comments feedback

Do you have any other comments you would like to make about the draft Policy? (21 responses)		
Theme	Comments	No. of responses
Social media and website	Social media is a valid way for people to make a submission	4
	This interface isn't on the Council website and should be	
	A lot of residents who miss any involvement with Council decision making...have a separate menu item on your website for Neighbourhood Forums (Community Engagement)? Or do more 'social media' promotion.	
	To seek information you need to log on	
Register of Interest	I would love to get an email (opt in) from the Council of all Projects.	1
How	What are the processes that will be undertaken to encourage and support community engagement?	4
	Implementation processes ought to be part of the description.	
	It's time Councillors organise Ward meetings.	
	I am interested in the areas of 'techniques'.	
Objections	It is important for residents to know how they can object to proposals.	1
Stakeholders	How does council identify who the 'Stakeholders'.	1
Accessibility	Great to see acknowledgement of Country in the introduction.	5
	Legible [big] print, or at least give them the option of receiving such a copy.	
	Meet the needs of people with literacy and numeracy troubles	
	Include a definition of inclusiveness that includes everybody.	
	Approach the community at different life stages...Multicultural connections too.	
Accountability	Needs to have a mechanism in place to ensure they are being met.	5
	Governance processes (that ensure the Policy is followed) also ought to be included.	
	I was not clear on how you will evaluate the process or how feedback would be provided.	
	Yep it's all great and colourful but it just doesn't represent reality	
	Not sure where there is a section relating to ensuring that these influences are not modified or inhibited by negative factors.	
Graphics	Graphics like this can be really helpful, but it's important to ensure that they look meaningful, and not just a whole range of 'jargon' words...the link between the graphic and the text is not immediately	4

	obvious.	
	Diagram should read "DECIDE" rather than "DECISION".	
	IAP2 table the goal of the inform category could say "decisions have been made and why"	
	The infographics are clear and easy to understand but the tables are confusing.	

Email submissions

Five submissions were received via email, including two from Neighbourhood Forums (NF1 and NF5), and two from community members who attended the Cuppa and a Chat. The feedback is presented in Table 10.

Table 10 – Feedback received via email

Email submissions (5 responses)		
Theme	Comments	No. of responses
Transparency	It is important that all participants can access the information	1
Plain language	Information needs to be in plain English, with links to more technical information	1
	The use of the words Cost Effective	
Clear objectives	Objectives need to be clearly identified	1
Access to information	As many projects may take years to implement it is important that the information can be recovered and is traceable	1
Accountability	It is important that the community can see who is accountable for the decisions.	2
	'Our Commitment to our Community', from my experience, you have failed in achieving most of the bullet points.	
Promotion	Advertising of Council Notices [not effective].	2
	Positive feedback should be encouraged	
Register of Interest	Ask people to register ...to receive communication	1
Timeliness	Any engagement have a minimum of two weeks added to its period [if during Christmas school holidays]	1
Stakeholders	Identify stakeholder groups and have a list that community can see	1
Terminology	Your definition of community is far too broad	3
	The purpose of Community Engagement is to help develop the plan	

	that gives the best possible services to the greatest number of residents in the most cost effective manner.	
	What is the meaning of ownership of solutions?	
Neighbourhood Forums	Need for more resources and support for Neighbourhood Forums	1
^ collaboration	There are far too few instances of collaborative engagement	1
Place manager	Place Managers	1

Summary of key themes - Cuppa and a chat

A summary of key themes emerging from the Cuppa and a Chat discussion are presented in Table 11.

Table 11 – Summary of key themes – Cuppa and a chat

Theme	Comments
Plain language	Needs to be simplified. People often say “we never understand what it is all about”
Promotion	A lot of people don’t know they can voice their opinion
Processes	Make sure information is correct and logical before sending out
	Ensure options are feasible, sensible and practical
	Only ask questions when decisions can be implemented – “not just fluff”
	Balance of online and face-to-face engagement – “cover all bases”
Closing the feedback loop	Love “We asked, You said, We did”
	Let us know how many people responded and what they said
Accessibility and Inclusion	Inclusive and acknowledge diversity of our City.
	Use plain, simple English. Suitable for ESL speakers and others
	Build older people’s capacity to have their say online:
Website (Have Your Say)	Needs to be simplified
	Tricky to navigate
	We want to see what is happening, where it’s up to, how you can have your say, and what’s already been done (e.g. letters sent out)
	Send out newsletters with opt in tags for individuals’ areas of interest
	Make sure title makes it clear, can delete if not relevant
	Create a fillable form (rather than PDF) so people can type into it
	Make it possible to save and edit online submissions (or submit later/submit again).
	Use polls for easier options
	Give people sufficient time to read and respond

Kiosks	Take submissions verbally at kiosks
	Follow up queries at kiosks:
	Staff training for kiosks ...particularly on how to acknowledge negative feedback
Neighbourhood Forums	Positive rather than complaining. A good chairperson reins in the conversation.
	Council attendance as guest speaker = instant feedback loop
	Informative activity with people who get involved
Culture and change	Council is becoming more open and engaging
	Consider political views of Councillors
	Needs internal engagement too – hesitance on cultural change
Future	Planning for a sustainable future
Libraries	Utilise the library to display detailed documents
	Have a set of these documents in reference section
	Access via Librarians

Appendix 2: Cover Sheet – Community Engagement Policy Review



OUR PLACE **our voice** FOR THE FUTURE 

What do you think? Help us review our draft Community Engagement Policy

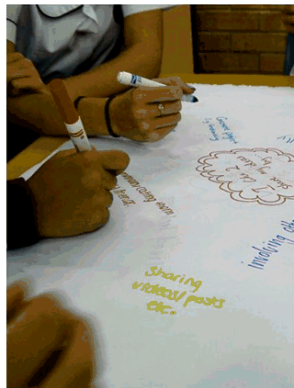
It's time to review Council's Community Engagement Policy, and we want to know what you think.

Community engagement describes all the ways Council talks with the community about things that affect our future.

We know that policy documents can be bureaucratic. So we have made some changes to this important document to make it easier to read, and to be clear about our commitment to connect and engage with you - our community.

This commitment sets out how we can work together to make decisions for Wollongong.

Feedback must be received by 5pm, Monday 4 June 2018.



Tell us what you think!

The easiest way to give feedback is by visiting Council's online community engagement website at:
www.haveyoursaywollongong.com.au

You can also give feedback by:

- Filling out a feedback form, available online, at your local branch library, and at Council's Customer Service Centre (41 Burelli St, Wollongong).
- Joining us for a Cuppa and a Chat about community engagement (fill out an Expression of Interest to apply)
- Emailing engagement@wollongong.nsw.gov.au
- Calling Council on 4227 7111

Please read Council's Privacy Notification before making a comment or submission (www.wollongong.nsw.gov.au/pages/privacy.aspx)

Appendix 3: Feedback Form



Draft Community Engagement Policy Review

Community Feedback Form

Community engagement describes all the ways Council talks with the community about things that affect our future.

We know that policy documents can be bureaucratic. So we have made some changes to this important document to make it easier to read, and to be clear about our commitment to connect and engage with you - our community. This commitment sets out how we can work together to make decisions for Wollongong.

Your thoughts on Council's draft Community Engagement Policy (attached) will help us better reflect the voice of our community.

All feedback must be received by 5pm, Monday 4 June 2018.

Please return completed form to:
 Wollongong City Council, Engagement Team, Locked Bag 8821, Wollongong DC NSW 2500
 Phone: (02) 4227 7111 Fax: (02) 4227 7277
 Email: engagement@wollongong.nsw.gov.au

PLEASE TELL US A LITTLE ABOUT YOURSELF

Question 1: In which suburb do you live? _____

Question 2: Your age (please tick category)

<18 years 19-25 years 26-35 years 36-45 years 46-55 years 56-65 years 66 -75 years
 76+

If you would like a reply to your submission and to be kept informed of progress please fill in the section below.

Name:	
Address:	
Suburb:	Email:

Privacy Notification:
 The purpose for seeking your submission on advertised matters is to better assist Council in its decision making processes. The intended recipients of your submission are officers within Council and those granted lawful access to the information. Your submission may be exhibited on Council's website and included in publicly accessible registers. If you make an anonymous submission, Council will be unable to contact you further.
 If your submission relates to a development proposal or other relevant planning application, Council is required to disclose on its website all relevant details of political donations or gifts made by you, including your name and address.
 In limited circumstances, you may apply for suppression of your personal information from a publicly accessible register. Further information is available on Council's website at www.wollongong.nsw.gov.au/pages/privacy.aspx or by phoning Council on (02) 4227 7111

www.wollongong.nsw.gov.au

What do you think? Help us review our Community Engagement Policy

Have Your Say Wollongong

Feedback form

Your thoughts on Council's draft Community Engagement Policy will help us better reflect the voice of our community.

Please read the draft Policy (attached) before responding to this survey.

Policy wording about what community engagement is

WHAT IS COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT?

It is how we reach out and encourage you, our community, to talk with us about the plans, projects and policies we develop on your behalf. It is about asking the community to help Council make decisions.

Community Engagement processes are undertaken to:

- Support decision making;
- Build relationships;
- Strengthen community;
- Build a sense of belonging.

Is this a clear description of what community engagement is? (Choose any one option)

- Yes
 No

Is there anything we should clarify in our description of what community engagement is?

What do you think? Help us review our Community Engagement Policy

Have Your Say Wollongong

Policy wording about our commitment

OUR COMMITMENT TO OUR COMMUNITY

We are committed to involving our community in decision making about things that affect them.
This means:

- We will engage with you in an effective, timely and transparent manner;
- We offer a range of ways for you to participate;
- We encourage all community members to have their say;
- We value your ideas, views and local knowledge;
- We include community views in Council decision making processes.

Does our commitment meet your expectations? (Choose any one option)

- Yes
 No

Answer this question only if you have chosen "No" for "Does our commitment meet your expectations?"

Can you tell us more about why our commitment does not meet your expectations?

What do you think? Help us review our Community Engagement Policy

Have Your Say Wollongong

Policy wording about principles

OUR PRINCIPLES OF OPEN AND EFFECTIVE COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

Council is committed to the following principles of community engagement:

1. We aim to be flexible

We aim to provide a variety of ways you can be informed and have your say. We encourage feedback from you and all community members who may be affected by, or are interested in, a decision we make on our community's behalf.

2. We will be inclusive

We live in a diverse community and it's important everyone's voices are heard. We will ensure children and young people, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders, people from culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) backgrounds, people with a disability, and any other community members who need support, have access and opportunities to get involved and have their say.

3. We believe community engagement is important for good governance

We are committed to engaging with you, our community, as a core component of good governance and effective decision making. Your feedback will be used to continuously improve the service we provide.

4. We aim to effectively plan each engagement

Through effective planning and engagement techniques we will avoid duplication or over-consultation. You will be encouraged to have your say in a timely manner and consultations will run during school terms. Where we are unable to avoid school holidays, additional consultation time will be factored in.

What do you think? Help us review our Community Engagement Policy

Have Your Say Wollongong

Policy wording about principles (continued)

5. We will give you feedback

We are committed to letting you know that your views, concerns and feedback have been heard and what the final decision is.

Do you agree with our principles for open and effective engagement? (Choose any one option)

- Yes
 No
 Unsure

Answer this question only if you have chosen "No" for "Do you agree with our principles for open and effective engagement? "

What do you disagree with in our principles?

Answer this question only if you have chosen "Unsure" for "Do you agree with our principles for open and effective engagement? "

What are you unsure about in our principles?

What do you think? Help us review our Community Engagement Policy

Have Your Say Wollongong

Policy wording about role of Councillors and Council staff

ROLE OF COUNCILLORS

Councillors are your elected representatives. They meet with the community in a range of ways including sitting on Committee and Reference Groups, and attending Council meetings, events and engagement activities, to hear your views, concerns and aspirations. As a community member you're able to contact your Councillors directly. Their contact details are listed on Council's website.

Councillors may attend opportunities set up by staff to talk with the community. At these community engagements the Councillors' role is to listen, discuss and record community feedback so it can be considered in decision making. Councillors may also engage with the community without staff involvement.

ROLE OF COUNCIL STAFF

The requirements to engage with the community on matters that affect them are set out in the Local Government Charter (section 8).

Council staff are responsible for providing clear and unbiased information to help the community understand a project, the process of having a say, and how the feedback received will be reported.

APPLICATION OF THIS POLICY

This Policy applies to Council's:

- Councillors
- Staff
- Volunteers
- Contractors
- Consultants

What do you think? Help us review our Community Engagement Policy

Have Your Say Wollongong

We set out the role of Councillors and Council staff. Is what we say clear? Have we missed anything?

A diagram showing the factors influencing Council's decision making



What do you think? Help us review our Community Engagement Policy

Have Your Say Wollongong

Do you understand the factors influencing Council's decision making? (Choose any
one option)




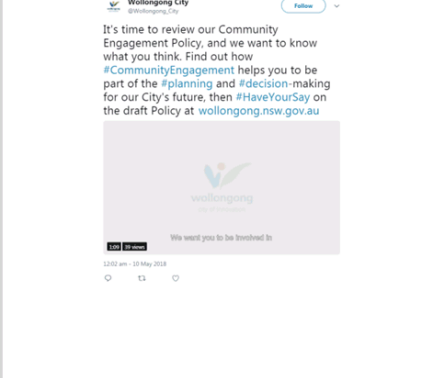


- Yes
 No


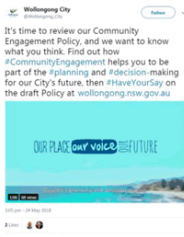

Answer this question only if you have chosen "No" for "Do you understand the factors influencing Council's
decision making?"

What is unclear about how Council makes decisions?

Do you have any other comments you would like to make about the draft policy?

Appendix 4: Social Media Coverage

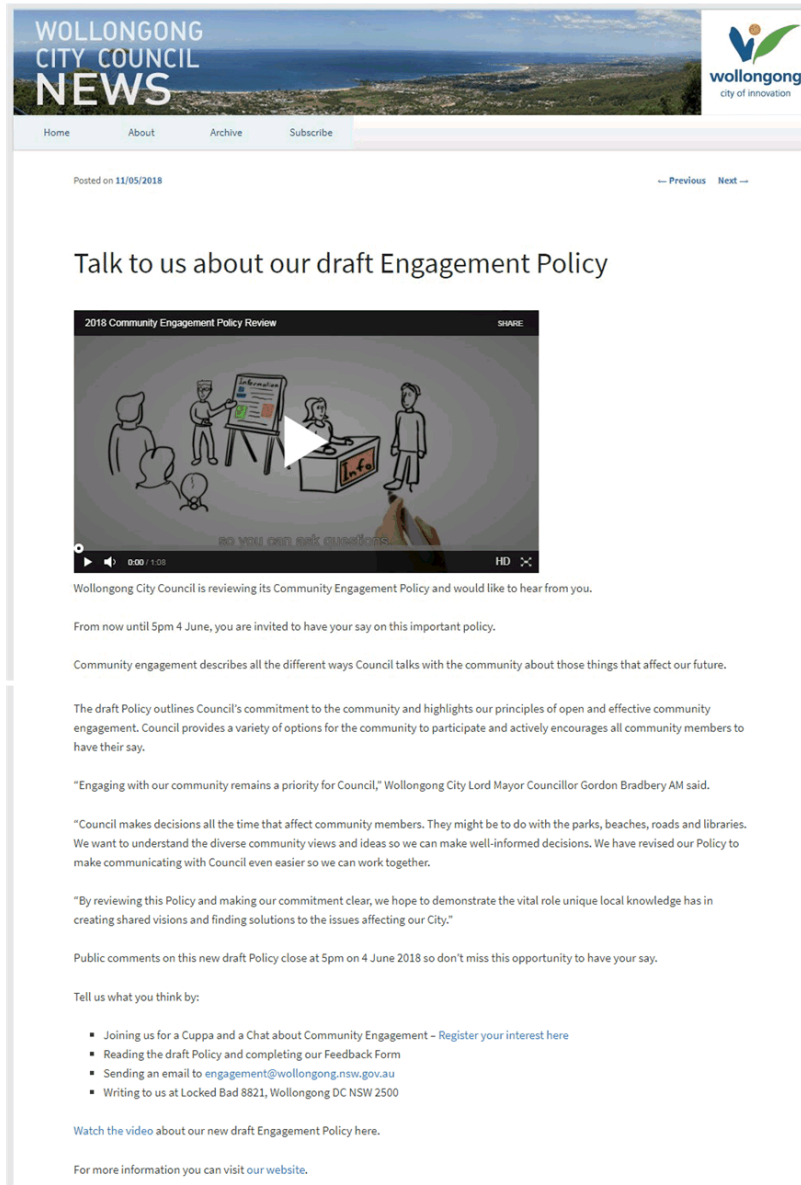
<p>Twitter, 7 May 2018 https://twitter.com/Wollongong_City/status/993405361095786496</p> 	<p>Facebook, 10 May 2018 https://www.facebook.com/story.php?story_fbid=1660780250656730&id=193741504027286</p> 
<p>Instagram, 10 May 2018 https://www.instagram.com/p/BiljPPFjmAc/?taken-by=wollongongcity</p> 	<p>Twitter, 10 May 2018 https://twitter.com/Wollongong_City/status/994472715439476736</p> 
<p>Twitter, 10 May 2018 https://twitter.com/Wollongong_City/status/994730194396213249</p> 	<p>Twitter, 15 May 2018 https://twitter.com/Wollongong_City/status/996615019394723840</p> 

<p>Twitter, 17 May 2018 https://twitter.com/Wollongong_City/status/997288213986402306</p> 	<p>Twitter, 24 May 2018 https://twitter.com/Wollongong_City/status/999773318034182144</p> 
<p>Twitter, 30 May 2018 https://twitter.com/Wollongong_City/status/1001723654651236352</p> 	Empty space

Appendix 5: Media Release

Talk to us about our draft Engagement Policy, 11 May 2018

<https://wccmediareleases.wordpress.com/2018/05/11/talk-to-us-about-our-draft-engagement-policy/>



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Talk to us about our draft Engagement Policy

2018 Community Engagement Policy Review

Wollongong City Council is reviewing its Community Engagement Policy and would like to hear from you.

From now until 5pm 4 June, you are invited to have your say on this important policy.

Community engagement describes all the different ways Council talks with the community about those things that affect our future.

The draft Policy outlines Council's commitment to the community and highlights our principles of open and effective community engagement. Council provides a variety of options for the community to participate and actively encourages all community members to have their say.

"Engaging with our community remains a priority for Council," Wollongong City Lord Mayor Councillor Gordon Bradbery AM said.

"Council makes decisions all the time that affect community members. They might be to do with the parks, beaches, roads and libraries. We want to understand the diverse community views and ideas so we can make well-informed decisions. We have revised our Policy to make communicating with Council even easier so we can work together.

"By reviewing this Policy and making our commitment clear, we hope to demonstrate the vital role unique local knowledge has in creating shared visions and finding solutions to the issues affecting our City."

Public comments on this new draft Policy close at 5pm on 4 June 2018 so don't miss this opportunity to have your say.


Tell us what you think by:

- Joining us for a Cuppa and a Chat about Community Engagement - [Register your interest here](#)
- Reading the draft Policy and completing our Feedback Form
- Sending an email to engagement@wollongong.nsw.gov.au
- Writing to us at Locked Mail 8821, Wollongong DC NSW 2500

Watch the video about our new draft Engagement Policy here.

For more information you can visit our [website](#).

Appendix 6: E-newsletter to previously subscribed users on Have Your Say website



It's time to review Council's Community Engagement Policy

Hi [PARTICIPANT_SCREEN_NAME],

It's time to review Council's Community Engagement Policy, and as a community member who has previously had your say via Council's website, we'd like to know what you think.

[CLICK HERE TO READ THE DRAFT POLICY](#)

Tell us what you think by:

- Reading the draft Policy and completing our Feedback Form
- Joining us for a Cuppa and a Chat about community engagement - [Register your interest here](#)
- Sending an email to engagement@wollongong.nsw.gov.au
- Writing to us at Locked Bag 8821, WOLLONGONG DC NSW 2500.

Have a question? You can use the Q and A tool, send us an email or give us a call on (02) 4227 7111 and we'll get an answer back to you ASAP.


Comments close at 5pm on 4 June 2018.

Please read Council's Privacy Notification before making your submission.

What is Community Engagement?

Community engagement describes all the ways Council talks with the community about things that affect our future.

Find out how community engagement helps you to be part of Council's planning and decision making for our City's future in our short YouTube video:



(View video on YouTube)

If you get involved, you can:

- Learn more about what Council does
- Share your views and ideas
- Help make Wollongong a better place to live.

Why do we need a new Community Engagement Policy?

We know that policy documents can be bureaucratic and not very interesting. So we have made some changes to this important document to make it easier to read, and to be clear about our commitment to connect and engage with you - our community.

Thank you for taking the time to tell us what you think. We look forward to seeing your input and ideas.

Kind regards,

The Community Engagement Team

You're receiving this email because you are a registered participant on Have Your Say Wollongong.
Powered by EngagementHQ
[Unsubscribe](#)

Appendix 7: Run Sheet for Cuppa and a Chat



Project: Community Engagement Policy Review
Event: Cuppa and a Chat
Date: 25 May 2018
Location: Diggies, North Wollongong

Run Sheet

Responsibility	Item	
Clem	Introductions: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Name - What suburb you live in - What makes you feel part of our community - Why you've come along today? 	
Jane	The Engagement team: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - What is community engagement? - Who are we - What do we do (example projects) 	
Clem	Policy review: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Why review the policy? - Benchmarking process - Children and young people 	
Jane	Discussion points: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - How have you engaged previously? - How has that been for you? - What else could we be doing differently? - What do you want to see more (or less) of? 	
Clem	Wrap up: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Thanks for coming - Make a submission (online, email, writing) by Monday 4 June, 5pm 	





OUR PLACE **our voice** FUTURE

Acknowledgement of Country

Wollongong City Council would like to show their respect and acknowledge the Traditional Custodians of the Land, of Elders past and present, and extend that respect to other Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.

We want to hear your views, involve you in creating shared visions, and finding solutions to questions affecting our community. This process is called community engagement.

WHAT IS COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT?

Community engagement is how we reach out and encourage you, our community, to talk with us about the plans, projects and policies we develop on your behalf. It is about asking and listening to the community to help us make decisions.

Community Engagement is important, it:

- Informs decision making;
- Builds relationships and trust;
- Strengthens community;
- Builds a sense of belonging; and
- Keeps the community informed.

OUR COMMITMENT TO COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

We are committed to the following principles of community engagement:

1. We aim to be flexible

We will keep you informed and give you opportunities to have your say in a variety of ways. We encourage feedback from you and all community members who may be affected by, or are interested in, a decision we make on our community's behalf.

2. We will be inclusive

We live in a diverse community and know it's important everyone's voices are heard. We also recognise the unique and significant contribution made by Aboriginal people to the local community. We will ensure Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders, people from culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) backgrounds, children and young people, people with a disability, and community members who need support, have appropriate access and opportunities to get involved and have their say.

3. We believe community engagement is important for good governance

We are committed to engaging with you, our community, as a core component of good governance and effective decision making. We value your ideas, views and local knowledge. Your feedback will be used to continuously improve the service we provide.

4. We aim to effectively plan each engagement

Through effective planning and engagement techniques we will avoid repeatedly asking the community to provide feedback about the same topic. You will be encouraged to have your say in a timely manner and consultations will run during school terms. Where we are unable to avoid school holidays, additional consultation time will be factored in.

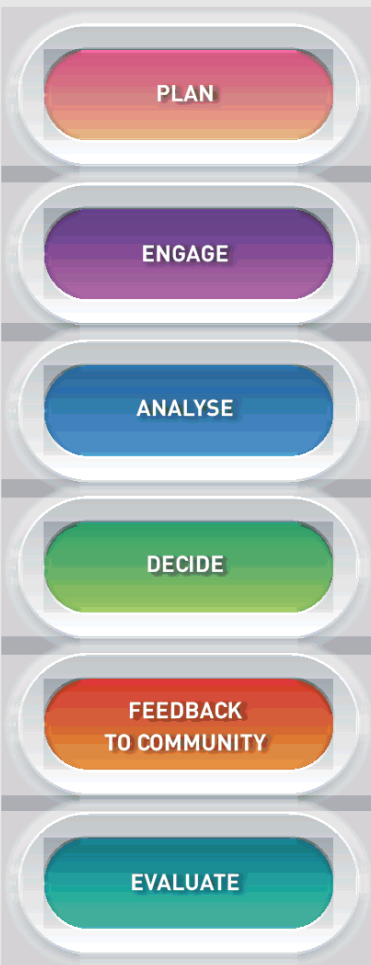
5. We will give you feedback

We are committed to letting you know that your views, concerns and feedback have been heard and will keep you informed about what the final decision is.



OUR PROCESS OF COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

Each engagement will be tailored to the needs of the affected community and the individual project. We will undertake six key steps.



First we PLAN:

When planning an engagement we consider who, when, and how the process will be conducted. Council and the community benefit from sharing new ideas, skills, knowledge, expertise and experiences.

• Who we engage

We define community as all people and groups who are interested in the future of Wollongong. This includes government and non-government agencies, community groups, businesses, residents and visitors. We will target engagements to those who might be impacted by or interested in a decision.

• When we engage

Community engagement happens at the planning stage of a project or initiative, when a change of service, activities or infrastructure is considered, when an issue is raised and requires a decision, or when more information or evidence is required. For a long-term project or activity there is likely to be multiple stages of engagement.

• How we engage

The level of engagement will depend on the level of interest and impact a plan or project will have on the community. A detailed table setting out the levels of engagement and examples of engagement methods are listed on page 5.

Then we ENGAGE:

This is when we talk directly with you, the community, about a project. We call this the engagement or exhibition period.

For each engagement process we will explain:

- What the engagement is about;
- Where to find out more information about the topic;
- How you can have your say;
- The timeframe you have to provide your comments;
- What happens to your feedback.

We accept community feedback in a variety of formats such as written letters, emails, surveys and feedback forms. We also uses face to face and workshop techniques to gain community feedback.

All submissions can be made available for people to read. You can request we remove your personal information from your submission.



Then we ANALYSE:

We read, review and analyse all feedback. From this an engagement report is written summarising what was said and presenting key themes and included in reports to Council. This is how your feedback becomes a key element in the decision making process.

Then we DECIDE:

Your views, ideas and local knowledge are an important part of the decision making process. Other things we need to consider include:

- Council Budget or Financial impact *(so we can spend your money wisely);*
- Legislation *(State and Federal);*
- Council policies and resolutions *(endorsed by your elected representatives);*
- Evidence provided by technical and professional assessment and industry best practice;
- Economic, environmental, social and governance impacts.

The diagram below shows how feedback is one of a number of considerations that are taken into account when a decision is made.

When an engagement you have participated in is being voted on at a Council meeting, you will be notified of the meeting date. Council reports are available online or via Customer Service before a meeting, and minutes following a meeting. You are also welcome to attend Council meetings or watch them online.

Ultimately, the decision is made by your elected representatives.

Then we FEEDBACK TO THE COMMUNITY about the decision:

We will let you know what the outcome of the engagement was including how your feedback was used and what decisions were made. This is often referred to as the feedback loop.

Then we EVALUATE:

We want to understand the community's satisfaction with our engagement activities and processes so that we can continue to improve the ways in which we engage.





ROLE OF COUNCILLORS

Councillors are your elected representatives. They meet with the community in a range of ways including sitting on Committee and Reference Groups, and attending Council meetings, events and engagement activities, to hear your views, concerns and aspirations. As a community member you're able to contact your Councillors directly. Their contact details are listed on Council's website.

Councillors may attend opportunities set up by staff to talk with the community. At these community engagements the Councillors' role is to listen, discuss and record community feedback so it can be considered in decision making. Councillors may also engage with the community without Council staff involvement.

ROLE OF COUNCIL STAFF

Council staff are responsible for providing clear and unbiased information to help the community understand a project, the ways they can have their say, and how the feedback received will be reported. Council staff will engage in a respectful and genuine way. The requirements to engage with you on matters that affect you are set out in the Local Government Charter (section 8).

APPLICATION OF THIS POLICY

This Policy applies to Council's:

- Councillors
- Staff
- Volunteers
- Contractors
- Consultants

RELATED DOCUMENTS

This Policy should be read in conjunction with the following documents:

Civil Works Notifications Policy - describes a standard notification process for construction and maintenance projects.

Public Notification and Advertising Procedures - sets out a standard notification and advertising process for development assessment and determination. It sets out criteria for assessments to be referred to the Independent Hearing and Assessment Panel.

Customer Service Policy - sets out Council's commitment to delivering quality customer service, and complaint handling.

Reference Group and Neighbourhood Forum Charters (various) - set out the purpose, recruitment and meeting practices for a variety of special interest topic reference groups and neighbourhood forums. These groups consist of community, Councillor and Council staff members.

Independent Hearing and Assessment Panel (IHAP) Charter - provides an independent forum for stakeholders (applicants and objectors) to present and discuss issues relating to controversial development proposals.





Public Access Forum Policy - provides community members with an opportunity to address Councillors prior to an ordinary meeting of Council.



LEVELS OF ENGAGEMENT

The guide below shows the four levels of engagement Council has adapted from the International Association of Public Participation (IAP2) Spectrum. A range of factors need to be considered to determine the level of engagement for each project including the engagement purpose, level of impact, degree of complexity, timeframes and legislation.

The process of community engagement is a dynamic one which means there is likely to be movement back and forth through the different levels of an engagement process especially for more complex projects. Whichever process is used, Council is responsible for the final decision.

LEVELS OF ENGAGEMENT				
	INFORM	CONSULT	INVOLVE	COLLABORATE
				
	AWARENESS BUILDING	IDEAS GENERATION	DISCUSS AND COLLATE	WORKING TOGETHER TO MAKE A DECISION
GOALS	Clear communication from Council to the community to assist their understanding of decisions that have been made.	Council seeks feedback from the community on draft plans, services, projects or policies. The community has an opportunity to have their say before a decision is made.	Council works with the community to understand issues and involves community members in designing possible solutions.	Council will offer opportunities for members of the community to work with us to understand issues and develop a range of solutions. We will work together to make a decision on a preferred solution.
PROMISE	We will use a variety of communication methods to keep the community informed. We will strive to ensure that information about Council services and plans is accessible and readily available. Council will provide community updates and information on decisions. Council acknowledges that sometimes it has to inform the community on decisions the community cannot change.	We will provide opportunities for the community to provide feedback on plans and projects that will be considered in decision making. We are committed to providing clear information about how and when the community can have their say and how feedback will be used.	We will provide opportunities for the community to work directly with Council to ensure we understand aspirations, opportunities, and concerns and that these are incorporated as often as possible into plans. We will provide feedback on how community input influenced decisions.	Council will partner with the community on the development of alternatives and solutions.
TECHNIQUES	Council's website and online media channels Council's newsletters Letters and emails Fact sheets Customer Service Events and functions Kiosks and information sessions	Public Access Forum Community Forums Kiosks Surveys and submissions Online engagement Independent Hearing and Assessment Panel	Community forums Kiosks Reference and Advisory groups Focus groups Workshops Online engagement	Focus groups Workshops Reference and Advisory groups Online engagement

* adopted from IAP2



SUMMARY SHEET	
Responsible Division	Community Cultural and Economic Development
Date adopted by Council	(To be inserted by Corporate Governance)
Date of previous adoptions	8 April 2013, Previously titled "Community Consultation" 25 May 2010, 28 November 2005, 28 October 2008
Date of next review	(List date - Not more than 4 years from adoption)
Legislative or other requirement for review DELETE THIS WHOLE ROW IF NOT APPLICABLE	(List review timeframe and Act, policy or review requirement)
Responsible Manager	Engagement Coordinator
Authorised by	Manager Community Cultural and Economic Development



OUR PLACE **our voice** FUTURE

*Recognises the value of your voice in determining our collective future.
It also recognises Councillors and staff as part of the same community.
Together we can create our future Wollongong.*

We are a connected and engaged community



ADOPTED BY COUNCIL: 8 APRIL 2013

BACKGROUND

This Community Engagement Council Policy commits to engaging the community, to seeking opportunities to inform the community, develop community partnerships and seek community input into decision making.

This Policy reflects the community's aspirations in Wollongong 2022: Our Community Strategic Plan to become a connected and engaged community.

Council will engage with the community in:

- building relationships and trust;
- seeking input into the design of services and policies;
- keeping the community informed about projects and plans;
- seeking joint ownership of solutions.

Council encourages the community to actively engage and work together with us to make decisions for our city.

OBJECTIVE

Council aims to engage with the community in line with Council's:

- Community Vision
- Community Goals
- Organisational Values

POLICY STATEMENT

Wollongong City Council is committed to engaging the community in an effective, timely and transparent manner so their views can provide input into decision making. 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 recognises its obligations under the Local Government Charter (section 8 and throughout the Local Government Act 1993) as they relate to consultation, participation and engagement.

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

COUNCIL POLICY

WHAT IS ENGAGEMENT?

Engagement is about asking the community to help Council make better decisions.

Engagement allows us to benefit from the local knowledge of the community, creating shared visions and commitment to solutions. Each engagement will be designed according to the needs of the project and the needs of the directly or indirectly affected community. For each engagement the community will be offered a variety of ways to be informed and have their say.

Council acknowledges that the level of input the community can have into decisions will vary according to the project. Council's promise to the community is outlined in the attached *Level of Engagement* table.

PRINCIPLES OF ENGAGEMENT

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.

PROCESS OF ENGAGEMENT

The decision to engage and the methodology used will be made by conducting the following analysis.

- **What decision has to be made?**

Community engagement is a process whereby the community can provide input into a decision making process. The decision to be made will be the key determinant of how each engagement is designed. Council will take a cross-divisional and multi-disciplinary approach to designing engagement processes.

- **Stakeholder analysis**

Council defines community as all people and groups who are interested in the future of Wollongong. This includes government and non-government agencies, community groups, businesses, residents and visitors.

Council will target engagements to stakeholders directly and indirectly impacted by a decision and those likely to be interested in a decision.

- **When will we engage?**

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. The levels of engagement and our promise to the community are outlined in the attached table.

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

COUNCIL POLICY

Council will meet or exceed all legislative obligations for engagement methods and durations.

Council will consider the appropriate timing and duration, including the availability of community members and cultural sensitivities, in planning engagements. Council notes that its program of works, finance and other constraints will influence timing.

- **How will the community participate?**

Council offers a variety of ways for the community to participate in engagement to be accessible to a wide range of needs. The range of activities offered will be determined according to the needs of the specific project, location and the needs of the stakeholders targeted. The *Levels of Engagement* table outlines a number of methods Council currently uses but other method will be offered when appropriate.

- **What will happen to the community's feedback?**

Council considers all submissions received during an engagement or exhibition period. Closing dates and times will be clearly advertised to the community. Late submissions will be accepted if possible, dependent on reporting deadlines.

Council accepts community feedback in the form of written letters, emails, surveys and feedback forms. Council also uses workshop techniques to gain community feedback. Petitions will be accepted and must clearly state the request being made on each page. Signatures must be in the original handwriting of the signatory, be legible and include a valid address. Submissions from organizations, groups or companies will be considered as one unless containing multiple signatures.

Submissions can be made available for public inspection. Community members may request that Council suppress their personal information from their submission.

An analysis of feedback will be undertaken and a report prepared. A summary of community feedback will be included in Council reports to form an element of the decision making process.

- **How are decisions made?**

Council values community input into decision making processes. Council will consider community feedback along with other key considerations including:

- Council policies, resolutions and policy statements

- Financial impact

- State and Federal legislation

- Technical and professional assessment and industry best practice

- Quadruple bottom line: Economic, Environmental, Social and Governance assessment.

As a Local Government Authority, decisions are made by the elected Council or by Council officers under delegated authority.

- **How will the process be evaluated?**

The community's satisfaction with engagement services will be evaluated through its bi-annual Community Survey. Participants in engagement activities may also be given the opportunity to complete an evaluation form. Council encourages feedback about services through its customer relations unit.

ROLE OF COUNCILLORS

Councillors have an active role to play in engaging the community in order to understand their concerns and aspirations and consider these in decision making. The community can contact their Councillors "to discuss and contribute their views and ideas" (Councillor Guide, DLG, 2013)

Councillors will be invited to engage with the community through Council staff led processes. The role of both Council staff and Councillors in these engagements is to facilitate discussion, listen and record community feedback in order for it to be considered in decision making. Council staff are responsible for providing clear, unbiased information to assist the community in understanding the project and process of having a say, and reporting on feedback received. Councillors can also seek to create their own opportunities to engage the community without staff involvement.

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

COUNCIL POLICY

APPLICATION OF THIS POLICY

This Policy applies to Council's:

- Councillors
- Staff
- Volunteers
- Contractors
- Consultants

EVALUATION OF THIS POLICY

Council's engagement activities will be regularly evaluated and reported to the community through Council's quarterly and annual reports and Delivery Program Progress report.

This Policy will be reviewed early in each new Council term.

RELATED DOCUMENTS

This Policy should be read in conjunction with the following documents:

- **Civil Works Notifications Policy** - describes a standardised notification process for civil infrastructure construction and maintenance projects across the local government area.
- **Public Notification and Advertising Procedures** - this appendix to the Wollongong Development Control Plan sets out a standardised notification and advertising process for development assessment and determination. It sets out criteria for assessments to be referred to the Independent Hearing and Assessment Panel.
- **Customer Service Policy** - sets out Council's commitment to delivering quality customer service to the community, to effective complaint handling, and providing the organization with information to inform continuous improvement.
- **Customer Service Charter** - identifies the minimum standards the community can expect from Wollongong City Council. It explains how information can be obtained and outlines how the community can provide feedback for improving services.
- **Reference and Advisory Group Charters (various)** - set out the purpose, recruitment and meeting practices for a variety of special interest topic reference and advisory groups. These groups consist of community, Councillor and Council staff members.
- **Independent Hearing and Assessment Panel Charter** - the panel is used to add value and improve decision making in relation to development assessment in specific situations. It provides an independent forum for stakeholders (applicants and objectors) to present and discuss issues relating to controversial development proposals.
- **Public Access Forum Charter** - provides community members with an opportunity to address Councillors prior to an ordinary meeting of Council, acknowledging that consultation and contribution to the decision making of Council enhance the quality of Council's decisions.

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

COUNCIL POLICY

LEVELS OF ENGAGEMENT *				
	Inform	Consult	Involve	Collaborate
Goal	Clear communication from Council to the community to assist their understanding of decisions that have been made.	Council seeks feedback from the community on draft plans, services, projects or policies. The community has an opportunity to have their say before a final decision is made.	Council works with the community to understand issues and involves community members in designing possible solutions.	Council will offer opportunities for members of the community to work with us to understand issues and develop a range of solutions. We will work together to make a decision on a preferred solution.
Promise	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> We will use a variety of communication methods to keep the community informed. We will strive to ensure that information about Council services and plans is accessible and readily available. Council will provide community updates and information on decisions. Council acknowledges that sometimes it has to inform the community on decisions the community cannot change 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Council will provide opportunities for the community to provide feedback on plans and projects that will be considered in decision making. Council is committed to providing clear information about how and when the community can have their say and how feedback will be used. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Council will provide opportunities for the community to work directly with Council to ensure we understand aspirations, opportunities, and concerns and that these are incorporated as often as possible into plans. We will provide feedback on how community input influenced decisions. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Council will partner with the community on the development of alternatives and solutions.
Techniques	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Council's website and online media channels Council newsletters Letters and emails Fact sheets Customer service Events and festivals Kiosks and information sessions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Public Access Forum Ward meetings Community forums Kiosks Surveys and submissions Online engagement Communication channels Independent Hearing and Assessment Panel 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ward meetings Community forums Kiosks Reference and Advisory groups Focus groups Workshops Online engagement Communication channels 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Focus groups Workshops Reference and Advisory groups Online engagement Communication channels

* Adapted from IAP2

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

COUNCIL POLICY

SUMMARY SHEET

Responsible Division	Community Cultural and Economic Development
Date adopted by Council	8 April 2013
Date of previous adoptions	Previously titled "Community Consultation" 25 May 2010, 28 November 2005, 28 October 2008
Date of next review	8 April 2016
Prepared by	Engagement Coordinator
Authorised by	Manager Community Cultural and Economic Development





Acknowledgement of Country

Wollongong City Council would like to show their respect and acknowledge the Traditional Custodians of the Land, of Elders past and present, and extend that respect to other Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.

Council commits to engaging with our community. We want to hear your views, involve you in creating shared visions, and find solutions to issues affecting our community.

We are all different and, by hearing from you, we will uncover diverse views. We commit to listening to and considering all views.

Council will engage with the community to:

- Build relationships and trust;
- Seek input into the design of services and policies;
- Keep the community informed about projects and plans;
- Seek joint ownership of solutions.

Council encourages the community to actively engage and work together with us to make decisions for our city.

OUR COMMITMENT TO OUR COMMUNITY

We are committed to involving our community in decision making about things that affect them. This means:

- We will engage with you in an effective, timely and transparent manner;
- We offer a range of ways for you to participate;
- We encourage all community members to have their say;
- We value your ideas, views and local knowledge;
- We include community views in Council decision making processes.

WHAT IS COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT?

It is how we reach out and encourage you, our community, to talk with us about the plans, projects and policies we develop on your behalf. It is about asking the community to help Council make decisions.

Community Engagement processes are undertaken to:

- Support decision making;
- Build relationships;
- Strengthen community;
- Build a sense of belonging.

OUR PRINCIPLES OF OPEN AND EFFECTIVE COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

Council is committed to the following principles of community engagement:

1. We aim to be flexible

We aim to provide a variety of ways you can be informed and have your say. We encourage feedback from you and all community members who may be affected by, or are interested in, a decision we make on our community's behalf.

2. We will be inclusive

We live in a diverse community and it's important everyone's voices are heard. We will ensure children and young people, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders, people from culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) backgrounds, people with a disability, and any other community members who need support, have access and opportunities to get involved and have their say.

3. We believe community engagement is important for good governance

We are committed to engaging with you, our community, as a core component of good governance and effective decision making. Your feedback will be used to continuously improve the service we provide.



4. We aim to effectively plan each engagement

Through effective planning and engagement techniques we will avoid duplication or over-consultation. You will be encouraged to have your say in a timely manner and consultations will run during school terms. Where we are unable to avoid school holidays, additional consultation time will be factored in.

5. We will give you feedback

We are committed to letting you know that your views, concerns and feedback have been heard and what the final decision is.

OUR PROCESS OF COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

Each engagement will be tailored to the needs of directly and indirectly affected community and the project itself.



First we PLAN:

When planning an engagement we consider who, when, and how the process will be conducted. Council and the community benefit from sharing new ideas, skills, knowledge, expertise and experiences. It is also the community's opportunity to assist with democratic processes.

Who do we engage with?

We define community as all people and groups who are interested in the future of Wollongong. This includes government and non-government agencies, community groups, businesses, residents and visitors. Council will target engagements to stakeholders who might be directly and indirectly impacted by a decision and those likely to be interested in a decision.

When we engage

Community engagement happens at the planning stage of a project or initiative, when a change of service, activities or infrastructure is considered, when an issue is raised and requires a decision, or when more information or evidence is required. For a long-term project or program there is likely to be multiple stages of engagement.

How we engage

The level of engagement will depend on the level of interest and impact a plan or project will have on the community. A detailed table of the levels of engagement and some methods of engagement is on page 5.

The ENGAGEMENT:

This is when we talk directly with you, the community, about a project. We call this the engagement or exhibition period. For each engagement process we will explain:

- What the engagement is about;
- Where to find out more information about the topic;
- How you can have your say;
- The timeframe for your comments;
- What happens to your feedback.

We will always acknowledge your feedback.



All submissions are considered during an engagement or exhibition period. Closing dates and times will always be clearly advertised.

We accept community feedback in the form of written letters, emails, surveys and feedback forms. Council also uses workshop techniques to gain community feedback. All submissions can be made available for public inspection and you can request Council remove your personal information from your submission.

Then we ANALYSE:

We read, review and analyse all feedback. From this a report is written and the accompanying summary document we prepare will be included in any Council reports. This is how your feedback becomes a key element in the decision making process.

Then a DECISION is made:

A democracy provides opportunity for your views to be heard and for the elected representatives (your Councillors) to make decisions on your behalf. When we are making a decision we are required to consider the following:

- Council Budget or Financial impact (*so we can spend your money wisely*);
- Legislation (*State and Federal*);
- Council policies and resolutions (*endorsed by your elected representatives*);
- Evidence provided by technical and professional assessment and industry best practice;
- Economic, Environmental, Social and Governance impacts (*Quadruple bottom line*).

When a project you have provided feedback on is being voted on at a Council meeting, you will be notified of the meeting date. Council reports are available prior to a meeting, and minutes following a meeting. You are also welcome to attend Council meetings.

Your views, ideas and local knowledge are an important part of this decision making process. Community engagement does not replace the decision making role of your Councillors.





Then we TELL YOU ABOUT THE DECISION:

'What happened to my idea?', 'Did you listen?', 'Did you care?', and 'Did it make a difference?' These are reasonable questions that participants of an engagement will ask.

The **FEEDBACK LOOP** is one of the most important elements of the engagement process. We outline what happened with the community and stakeholder feedback and explain how it was used. The Feedback Loop demonstrates our genuine commitment to engagement and transparency of community views.

Finally we EVALUATE:

We seek to understand the community's satisfaction with our different engagements so that we can continue to improve the ways in which we engage with them.

ROLE OF COUNCILLORS

Councillors are your elected representatives. They meet with the community in a range of ways including sitting on Committee and Reference Groups, and attending Council meetings, events and engagement activities, to hear your views, concerns and aspirations. As a community member you're able to contact your Councillors directly. Their contact details are listed on Council's website.

Councillors may attend opportunities set up by staff to talk with the community. At these community engagements the Councillors' role is to listen, discuss and record community feedback so it can be considered in decision making. Councillors may also engage with the community without staff involvement.

ROLE OF COUNCIL STAFF

The requirements to engage with the community on matters that affect them are set out in the Local Government Charter (section 8). Council staff are responsible for providing clear and unbiased information to help the community understand a project, the process of having a say, and how the feedback received will be reported.

APPLICATION OF THIS POLICY

This Policy applies to Council's:

- Councillors
- Staff
- Volunteers
- Contractors
- Consultants

EVALUATION OF THIS POLICY

Council's engagement activities will be regularly evaluated and reported to the community through Council's quarterly and annual reports and Delivery Program Progress report. You can find these reports on our website.

This Policy will be reviewed early in each new Council term.

RELATED DOCUMENTS

This Policy should be read in conjunction with the following documents:

Civil Works Notifications Policy - describes a standardised notification process for civil infrastructure construction and maintenance projects across the local government area. Public Notification and Advertising Procedures - this appendix to the Wollongong Development Control Plan sets out a standardised notification and advertising process for development assessment and determination. It sets out criteria for assessments to be referred to the Independent Hearing and Assessment Panel.

Customer Service Policy - sets out Council's commitment to delivering quality customer service to the community, to effective complaint handling, and providing the organisation with information to inform continuous improvement.

Reference and Advisory Group Charters (various) - set out the purpose, recruitment and meeting practices for a variety of special interest topic reference and advisory groups. These groups consist of community, Councillor and Council staff members.

Independent Hearing and Assessment Panel Charter - the panel is used to add value and improve decision making in relation to development assessment in specific situations. It provides an independent forum for stakeholders (applicants and objectors) to present and discuss issues relating to controversial development proposals.





Public Access Forum Policy - provides community members with an opportunity to address Councillors prior to an ordinary meeting of Council, acknowledging that consultation and contribution to the decision making of Council enhance the quality of Council's decisions.



LEVELS OF ENGAGEMENT - THE IAP2 TABLE

The guide below shows the four levels of engagement Council has adapted from the International Association of Public Participation (IAP2) Spectrum. There are times when we will inform you about a decision we have made. For other projects we may engage with you at the consult or involve level. The collaborative level of engagement is more likely to be used for engagements like long term plans.

The process of community engagement is a dynamic one which means there is likely to be movement back and forth through the different levels of an engagement process especially for more complex projects. However, whichever process is used, Council is responsible for the final decision.

LEVEL OF ENGAGEMENT* adopted from IAP2				
	INFORM	CONSULT	INVOLVE	COLLABORATE
				
	A DECISION HAS BEEN MADE	MID LEVEL COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT		WORK TOGETHER TO MAKE A DECISION ON A PREFERRED SOLUTION
GOALS	Clear communication from Council to the community to assist their understanding of decisions that have been made.	Council seeks feedback from the community on draft plans, services, projects or policies. The community has an opportunity to have their say before a decision is made.	Council works with the community to understand issues and involves community members in designing possible solutions.	Council will offer opportunities for members of the community to work with us to understand issues and develop a range of solutions. We will work together to make a decision on a preferred solution.
PROMISE	We will use a variety of communication methods to keep the community informed. We will strive to ensure that information about Council services and plans is accessible and readily available. Council will provide community updates and information on decisions. Council acknowledges that sometimes it has to inform the community on decisions the community cannot change.	We will provide opportunities for the community to provide feedback on plans and projects that will be considered in decision making. We are committed to providing clear information about how and when the community can have their say and how feedback will be used.	We will provide opportunities for the community to work directly with Council to ensure we understand aspirations, opportunities, and concerns and that these are incorporated as often as possible into plans. We will provide feedback on how community input influenced decisions.	Council will partner with the community on the development of alternatives and solutions.
TECHNIQUES	Council's website and online media channels Council's newsletters Letters and emails Fact sheets Customer Service Events and functions Kiosks and information sessions	Public Access Forum Ward meetings Community Forums Kiosks Surveys and submissions Online engagement Communication channels Independent Hearing and Assessment Panel	Ward meetings Community forums Kiosks Reference and Advisory groups Focus groups Workshops Online engagement Communication channels	Focus groups Workshops Reference and Advisory groups Online engagement Communication channels
	AWARENESS BUILDING	IDEAS GENERATION	DISCUSS AND COLLATE	OUR COMMUNITY VISION



POLICY REVIEW AND VARIATION

- 1 Council is to have opportunity to review and adopt, at least once during its Term, each Council policy.
- 2 A resolution of Council is required to adopt any variations to this policy, with the exception of minor administrative changes, such as updates to legislative references, which may be endorsed by the Executive Management Committee (EMC). Endorsement of administrative changes made to this policy by EMC does not alter the requirement for it to be reviewed and adopted by each Term of Council.

SUMMARY SHEET

Responsible Division	Community Cultural and Economic Development
Date adopted by Council	(To be inserted by Corporate Governance)
Date of previous adoptions	8 April 2013, Previously titled "Community Consultation" 25 May 2010, 28 November 2005, 28 October 2008
Date of next review	(List date - Not more than 4 years from adoption)
Legislative or other requirement for review DELETE THIS WHOLE ROW IF NOT APPLICABLE	(List review timeframe and Act, policy or review requirement)
Responsible Manager	Engagement Coordinator
Authorised by	Manager Community Cultural and Economic Development



OUR PLACE **our voice** FUTURE

*Recognises the value of your voice in determining our collective future.
It also recognises Councillors and staff as part of the same community.
Together we can create our future Wollongong.*

We are a connected and engaged community