
POLICY TITLE: COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT POLICY

FOLDER NUMBER:

POLICY OWNER / DIVISION: Office of the General Manager

POLICY OWNER / BRANCH: Strategy and Place

FUNCTION: Engagement
Communication

RELEVANT LEGISLATION: Local Government Act 1993 (section 8A)
Environmental Planning and Assessment Act 1979 (division 2.6 schedule 1)

POLICY ADOPTION/AMENDMENT DATE: **REPORT NUMBER:**

REVIEW YEAR:

AMENDMENT HISTORY:

RELATED POLICIES/PLANS: Draft Community Engagement Plan ~~(including the Community Participation Plan – Your Say Matters)~~

POLICY PURPOSE:

The purpose of this Policy is to outline Council's commitment to building open, transparent and active relationships with the community. The Policy articulates the standards and principles that underpin all engagement practice within Council and outlines the high-level process by which engagement is planned and implemented.

Good engagement enables the community to stay informed, find their voice and participate in the decision-making process. Council engages with a diverse range of internal and external stakeholder groups on a daily basis and is committed to the process of engaging with every stakeholder segment, including those who are hard to reach.

Council will ensure that public participation is embedded within core business, and stakeholders are encouraged to discuss, decide and debate matters to create better outcomes for the community.

POLICY STATEMENT:

- Council’s engagement practice aligns with the International Association for Public Participation (IAP2) engagement principles and best practice¹. As such, Council believes anyone affected by a decision should have the right to be involved in the decision-making process.
- Strategic stakeholder engagement matches the impact of a community issue or Council project to the most effective and appropriate level of stakeholder influence on decisions.
- Stakeholder needs will be recognised and engagement methods selected that will create meaningful opportunities for participation and sustainable decisions.

	INFORM	CONSULT	INVOLVE	COLLABORATE	EMPOWER
PUBLIC PARTICIPATION GOAL	To provide the public with balanced and objective information to assist them in understanding the problem, alternatives, opportunities and/or solutions.	To obtain public feedback on analysis, alternatives and/or decisions.	To work directly with the public throughout the process to ensure that public concerns and aspirations are consistently understood and considered.	To partner with the public in each aspect of the decision including the development of alternatives and the identification of the preferred solution.	To place final decision making in the hands of the public.
PROMISE TO THE PUBLIC	We will keep you informed.	We will keep you informed, listen to and acknowledge concerns and aspirations, and provide feedback on how public input influenced the decision. We will seek your feedback on drafts and proposals.	We will work with you to ensure that your concerns and aspirations are directly reflected in the alternatives developed and provide feedback on how public input influenced the decision.	We will work together with you to formulate solutions and incorporate your advice and recommendations into the decisions to the maximum extent possible.	We will implement what you decide.

INTERNATIONAL ASSOCIATION FOR PUBLIC PARTICIPATION¹

POLICY STANDARDS:

- All levels of participation are legitimate. The avenues available will vary depending on the goals, timeframe, resources and impact of the decision Council needs to make.
- Engagement will be authentic and meaningful, it will clearly define stakeholder roles, articulate the impact and scope of the decision and deliver on Council’s participation promise to stakeholders.
- Council will seek to uphold the highest standard of engagement; projects (where applicable) are guided by a Community Engagement Plan that considers the relationship between stakeholders and Council’s decision.

<p>PARAMETERS</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What's the scope of the issue? • What's the engagement objective? 	<p>PRIORITISE</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Who will it impact? How? • Who do you need to consult? 	<p>PLAN</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What level of participation do you need? • What is and isn't negotiable? 	<p>PARTICIPATION</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Is the engagement accessible and inclusive of all stakeholders? • Are you closing the loop?
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POLICY PRINCIPLES:

- Seven core principles drive Council's approach to engaging the public. The principles are: -

1. Strategy-led

Our engagement activities are informed, intentional and led by a strategy that supports the vision and purposes of Council. We want to find better, smarter ways and our growth mindset means we're always looking to see how we can improve.

2. Proactive

Our engagement activities are rigorous and comprehensive. We engage so we can make decisions with the community, rather than for the community. Engagement helps us look to the future to anticipate needs.

3. Open and inclusive

Our engagement is strategic and captures accurate information that represents our community as a whole. We exist to serve the residents of Hornsby Shire – we're here for every person in every suburb. We provide a safe environment, so stakeholders feel comfortable and confident to be part of the decision-making process. We welcome respectful discussion and engagement.

4. Easy

Our engagement activities are easily accessible for our diverse community. We will present easy-to-understand information that is written in plain English, with simple but memorable visuals and opportunities for feedback. We're committed to two-way conversations where we lean in, listen carefully and speak clearly.

5. Relevant

Our engagement activities are purposeful and can be adapted to suit the context, nature, scale and levels of community interest in a project, plan or issue. We will capture our learnings from each engagement to continuously improve our engagement activities.

6. Timely

Our engagement activities will meet the required minimum legislated exhibition timeframes (where applicable). Depending on the nature of the project, plan or issue, we will set stakeholder feedback timeframes.

7. Meaningful

Our engagement activities are designed to help stakeholders become aware, informed and meaningfully involved in all of Council's decisions. Council will advise stakeholders how their input has influenced decisions. We will clearly articulate our vision for Hornsby Shire and explain reasons behind decisions.

POLICY APPLICATION:

The Policy applies to all staff, Councillors and contractors commissioned by Council to undertake community engagement work.

POLICY IMPLEMENTATION:

The Policy will be implemented through Council's Community Engagement Plan.

MORE INFORMATION

If you have further questions or need more information about our community engagement policy, please get in touch with our Communications and Engagement Manager.

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