



## Community Engagement Policy

<i>Responsible Officer/s</i>	Community Interaction and Promotion Officer Commercial and Community Services
<i>Relevant Legislation / Documents</i>	Local Government Act 1999, Section 50 Public Consultation Policy
<i>Adopted</i>	17 May 2023
<i>Reviewed</i>	
<i>Next Review</i>	17 May 2025

### A. Purpose

Council is committed to open, accountable, and responsive decision making, which is informed by effective communication and engagement between Council and the community.

Council acknowledges that the community has a right to be involved in, be informed of, and provide their feedback on decisions that affect them.

Council strives for transparency in decision making and communication about decisions made. By engaging the community on areas of interest, the community should feel greater confidence in Council and its responsive decision making.

The purpose of this policy is to:

- Shape the way Council conducts engagement with the community,
- Promote the opportunity for participation within various Council projects,
- Educate the community on the types of issues that their feedback can influence, and
- Strengthen the relationship between Council and the community.

### B. Objective

The objective of this policy is to ensure that Council meets its social responsibilities related to community engagement by:

- Using appropriate and cost-effective methods of engagement which are relevant to the specific circumstances of each project and engagement topic,
- Informing, involving, collaborating, and empowering the local community, key stakeholders and interested parties,
- Maintaining transparency about the degree of influence the community will be able to have on the decision made for each project or engagement topic,

- Using inclusive, representative, and accessible approaches to ensure all members within the community have access to the same engagement,
- Using feedback to enhance decision making, and
- Evaluating the successfulness of each engagement activity and tailoring subsequent engagement activities to ensure continual improvement.

A spectrum of public participation informs Council's community engagement activities, and provides a structure for levels of engagement based on the community's potential for impact on a decision:

- **Inform** – Providing the public with balanced and objective information to assist with the understanding of a problem, alternatives, opportunities and/or solutions.
- **Consult** – Obtaining public feedback on analysis, alternatives and/or decisions.
- **Involve** – Working directly with the public throughout the process to ensure that public concerns and aspirations are consistently understood and considered.
- **Collaborate** – Partnering with the public in each aspect of the decision including the development of alternatives and the identification of the preferred solution.
- **Empower** – Placing final decision-making in the hands of the public.

Further information on how community engagement activities may be shaped by each stage of the spectrum can be found in Council's [Community Engagement Framework](#) document.

## C. Policy

### 1. Scope

This policy applies to Council Members sitting as the elected body, Council employees, contractors, agents, and consultants acting on behalf of Council.

The Chief Executive Officer is responsible for the implementation of the Community Engagement Policy, establishing degree of engagement, reporting outcomes of engagement activities to the Council, reviewing the value of the policy, and determining elements within that process where Council has delegated responsibility.

### 2. Specific Requirements

Further to the preparation and adoption of this policy, Council also fulfils its obligations under section 50(1) of the Local Government Act 1999. Section 50 provides that:

- The Council must set out the steps that the Council will follow in cases where the Local Government Act requires consultation on a matter, and
- The Council may set out the steps that Council will following in other cases involving Council's decision- making.

In addition, under the Local Government Act Council has the following obligations where it is required by law to follow its Public Consultation Policy.

- Council must provide interested persons with a reasonable opportunity to make submissions regarding relevant matters

- Council must publish a notice in a newspaper circulating in the area and on the Council’s website, describing the matter under consideration and invite interested persons to make submissions within a period (which must be at least 21 days) stated in the notice
- Council must consider any submission received from the public during the prescribed consultation period.

Further information related to the requirements of public consultation under the Local Government Act can be found in Council’s [Public Consultation Policy](#).

#### D. Availability

This Policy will be available for inspection at the Council Offices at Loxton or Waikerie during ordinary business hours at no charge.

Copies of this Policy will also be available from Councils website: [www.loxtonwaikerie.sa.gov.au](http://www.loxtonwaikerie.sa.gov.au) or postal copies may be obtained from the Council Office free of charge.

#### E. Document history and version control

Date	Version	Authorisation	Amendment Details
17/05/2023	1	Elected Members	Adopted per draft