

5.4. COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT POLICY JUNE 2019

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DEPARTMENT Community Development

RECOMMENDATION

That Council:

1. **adopts the revised Community Engagement General Policy;**
 2. **delegates authority under Section 257 (1)(b) of the *Local Government Act 2009* to the Chief Executive Officer to finalise any minor amendments to the Community Engagement Policy.**
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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Council's Community Engagement Policy, adopted in March 2014, is due for review. The revised policy is presented in this report for adoption by Council for four years.

BACKGROUND

Section 4 of the *Local Government Act 2009* outlines local government principles underpinning this Act.

One of the principles is "democratic representation, social inclusion and meaningful community engagement."

To assist in this regard, a range of resources are available from the International Association for Public Participation (IAP2), an international association of members seeking to "promote and improve the practice of public participation / public engagement in relation to individuals, governments, institutions, and other entities that affect the public interest."

COMMENT

When the original policy was adopted a Community Engagement framework, principles, guidelines and tools were developed to assist with implementing the policy. The current policy was updated by Council Officer's to reflect contemporary practices.

PROPOSAL

The proposal is for Council to:

1. adopt the revised Community Engagement General Policy;
2. delegate authority under Section 257 (1)(b) of the *Local Government Act 2009* to the Chief Executive Officer to finalise any minor amendments to the Community Engagement Policy.

FINANCIAL/RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

Significant future projects and initiatives of a high impact and of major interest to Douglas residents and communities will require allocated personnel, consultants and budgetary resources to implement an appropriate and comprehensive Community Engagement Plan.

Ongoing and future engagement activities through coordinated media, newsletters and online services are currently, or will be, budgeted as part of Council general operations.

RISK MANAGEMENT IMPLICATIONS

A systematic, principled and strategic approach to community engagement based on best practice models demonstrates a clearly articulated approach and reduces the risk of lack of transparency, communication and consultation processes.

SUSTAINABILITY IMPLICATIONS

Economic: Nil

Environmental: Nil

Social: Nil

CORPORATE/OPERATIONAL PLAN, POLICY REFERENCE

This report has been prepared in accordance with the following:

Corporate Plan 2014-2019 Initiatives:

Theme 4 - Engage, Plan, Partner

4.1.2 - Undertake community engagement activities that are clearly identified and are appropriate in relation to the project.

COUNCIL'S ROLE

Council can play a number of different roles in certain circumstances and it is important to be clear about which role is appropriate for a specific purpose or circumstance. The implementation of actions will be a collective effort and Council's involvement will vary from information only through to full responsibility for delivery.

The following areas outline where Council has a clear responsibility to act:

Fully-Responsible Funding the full cost of a program or activity

CONSULTATION

Internal: Community Liaison Officer, Community Development Officer

External: Nil

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

Nil

ATTACHMENTS

1. DRAFT Community Engagement Policy June 2019 **[5.4.1 - 4 pages]**



GENERAL POLICY

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

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1. Intent

To provide Council with direction in relation to planning, implementing and evaluating community engagement activities.

2. Scope

This Policy applies to elected members of Council, all employees and any consultants engaged by Council.

3. Background

Section 4 of the *Local Government Act 2009* outlines local government principles underpinning this Act. One of the principles is “democratic representation, social inclusion and meaningful community engagement.”

To assist in this regard, a range of resources are available from the International Association for Public Participation (IAP2), an international association of members seeking to “promote and improve the practice of public participation / public engagement in relation to individuals, governments, institutions, and other entities that affect the public interest.”

4. Objectives

To provide Council with guidance and direction in relation to planning and implementing community involvement approaches to engage community members.

5. Provisions

1. When will Council engage the community?

Community engagement must be undertaken when:

- 1.1 It is a requirement under legislation. There are a number of legislative requirements and standards that apply to Local Government and its decision making.
- 1.2 It is a requirement under a funding agreement. Engagement may be an obligation attached to the receipt of Government funding;
- 1.3 Council resolves to recommend the need for community engagement.
- 1.4 A council operated community service, facility, community focused policy or event is to be introduced, changed or discontinued, which may impact on the community.
- 1.5 Introduction of a new development, service or program that may affect community members.

2. What approach does Council have towards community engagement?

- 2.1 Our approach to community engagement can be described as a selection of activities ranging from ‘informing’ to ‘consulting’ to having communities ‘actively participate’ in initiatives which contribute to decision making processes. The people who live, work, play, use services and do business within the Douglas Shire have expertise and local knowledge which can improve decision making.
- 2.2 This policy is supported by Council’s Community Engagement Framework and Principles of Community Engagement.
 - *Appendix 1: Community Engagement Framework*
 - *Appendix 2: Principles of Community Engagement*

- 2.3 In undertaking all activities, Council employees across all departments must consider the need for community engagement and are supported by the Community Development team who provide advice on community engagement plans and assist and/or manage their implementation.
- 2.4 Specific types of engagement activities will vary and be dependent on the potential level of impact, subject matter, those involved, potential legislative requirements and budget considerations. In some instances there will be different approaches to engagement activities;
 - Consulting community on input or feedback, or
 - Informing community of a decision, or
 - Active participation with a focus on participation in consultation and decision-making.
- 2.5 The Community Engagement procedure directs the operational requirements for the creation of a Community Engagement Plan.
- 2.6 The Community Development Section provides advice for developing and delivering professional Community Engagement Plans.

3. Advisory Panels/ Committees and Taskforces

Council projects and initiatives that have a higher level of impact from time to time may require higher levels of engagement such as the establishment of advisory panels/ committees or taskforces. Engagement methods such as these will:

- 3.1 be established by a Council resolution;
- 3.2 have a specific terms of reference;
- 3.3 have a defined timeframe;
- 3.4 report at least once every 6months to Council;
- 3.5 be chaired by a suitably qualified external person or Councillor;
- 3.6 identify Council staff resources to act as a project officer and secretary to the committee or taskforce;
- 3.7 record minutes and membership of these panels/ committees and taskforces and have the minutes available on the Council website.

6. References

Legislation:

Local Government Act 2009

Local Government Regulation 2012

Sustainable Planning Act 2009 (Qld)

Other:

Australian Government Information Management Office

International Association for Public Participation (IAP2)

Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD)

7. Definitions

Consulting – gaining community input, feedback or alternatives on Council activities.

Informing – advising the community of a decision of a particular activity, project or service.

Active participation – consulting the community about a particular activity, project or service and involvement by community members in the decision-making process

This policy is to remain in force until otherwise determined by Council.
Manager Responsible for Review: Manager Community Development

ORIGINALLY ADOPTED: 11/03/2014

CURRENT ADOPTION: 18/06/2019

DUE FOR REVISION: 18/06/2023

REVOKED/SUPERSEDED:

DRAFT