COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT GENERAL POLICY

Contents

Intent

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

Scope

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

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."

Objectives

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

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.

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)

Definitions

TERM	DEFINITION
Consulting	Gaining community input, feedback or alternatives on Council activities.
Informing	Advising the community of a decision of a particular activity, project or service.

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

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This policy is to remain in force until otherwise determined by Council.

Manager Responsible for Review: Manager Community Development

ORIGINALLY ADOPTED: 11/03/2014

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DUE FOR REVISION: 18/06/2023

REVOKED/SUPERSEDED: