COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT POLICY

PURPOSE

This policy sets out the governing principles for community engagement and consultation that underpin the Integrated Planning and Reporting Framework to ensure the strategic direction of the organisation is in keeping with community values and aspirations.

This Community Engagement Policy outlines the Shire of Quairading's commitment to appropriate, effective and inclusive community engagement. This Policy will guide the delivery of community and stakeholder engagement across the organisation to inform decision-making, build relationships and strengthen community outcomes.

OBJECTIVE

This Policy provides guidance to Councillors and Officers in planning, implementing and reviewing community engagement and consultation for key projects, strategic planning and policy development. This is to ensure informed decision-making, transparency, timely and effective communication with key stakeholders and the general community.

The objectives of the Policy are:

- Provide the public with a clear understanding of Council's commitment to community and stakeholder engagement
- Achieve good governance by facilitating open, honest and timely engagement with stakeholders and the community on programs, projects and initiatives that may impact their lives or livelihood
- Raise awareness of Council decisions and community aspirations surrounding programs, projects and initiatives
- Allow for informed decision-making to collectively achieve improved quality of life in the Shire of Quairading.

POLICY STATEMENT

This Policy outlines our promise to the community to undertake best practice community engagement. The Policy should be applied at the scoping phase of any project that may require community engagement and is the responsibility of all Shire staff and contractors.

Community engagement is the responsibility of everyone at the Shire of Quairading. To ensure the effective application of community engagement across the Shire, community engagement guidelines, tools and templates have been developed to provide guidance for Shire employees.

Council's Community Engagement Policy is built upon a set of six principles that guide the planning, implementation, decision making, reporting and evaluation of community engagement processes undertaken by Council. These principles were developed in response to feedback from our community and are aligned with the International Association for Public Participation (IAP2) core values:

A) Integrity – we will be transparent and open about the process and decision to be made

B) Inclusivity – we will identify who the relevant stakeholders are and provide opportunities for a diverse range of perspectives to be heard

C) Informed – we will provide well timed information, that you need in order to participate

D) Accountability – we will consider your input and tell you how it influenced the outcome

E) Excellence – we will evaluate our practice and apply our learnings to drive continuous improvement

F) Innovation – we will develop and apply new ideas that improve the way we engage

Good governance is based on a belief that those impacted by or interested in a decision may have important contributions to make in a decision-making process. In planning a community engagement process, the Shire will determine at which levels they will engage and what corresponding commitment they will make to the community and/or stakeholders. This will determine the nature and methods of engagement.

Council decision-making processes are influenced by several factors such as financial and resource considerations, political directives, and environmental and social concerns. As such if a difference occurs between the engagement outcomes and Council's final decision, the decision will be clearly stated.

How do we engage?

The level of engagement selected for a process will reflect several considerations, including any constraints, the role of the public in the engagement process and the decision to be made.

There is no 'one-size-fits-all' approach to community engagement activities. A variety of methods will be required to cater for the different purposes of engagement as well as the broad range of groups and individuals in the community.

EVALUATION

An Annual Assessment of the level of engagement achieved to be reported to the June Audit & Risk Committee.

DEFINITIONS

IAP2

The International Association for Public Participation is an international organisation advancing the practice of public participation. IAP2 supports people who implement or participate in public decision-making processes.

Community Engagement

Community engagement is a planned process with the specific purpose of working across organisations, stakeholders, and communities to shape the decisions or actions of the members of the community, stakeholders or organisation in relation to a problem, opportunity or outcome. (IAP2 Australasia)

<u>Community</u>

Includes individuals or groups who live, work, play, study, visit or invest in the Shire of Quairading Local Government Area.

<u>Stakeholder</u>

Groups or individuals with a specific stake in the outcome of a decision, or impact of a project.

<u>Good Governance</u>

Effective processes for making and implementing decisions.

RESPONSIBILITY

Responsibility for the implementation of this Policy rests with the Council, Chief Executive Officer and Staff of the Shire.

GUIDELINES

Community Engagement Action Plan 2024

Annexure A - Principles for Community Engagement - Community engagement underpins the development of the Integrated Planning Framework and ensures that community needs, and aspirations are considered in developing and implementing Council's strategic directions and priorities - Annexure A (Attached).

Local Government Act (1995) - Local councils in Western Australia are legally required to conduct public consultation through a prescribed process on a range of specific matters.

Quairading Strategic Community Plan 2021-2031 - All of Council's strategic documents are linked to an Integrated Planning Framework. This framework seeks to ensure that all of Council's activities and resources are aligned to meet the aspirations, needs and expectations of the Shire's community.

Customer Service Charter.

Communication Policy.

Complaints Policy.

STATUTORY ENVIRONMENT

Local Government Act (1995) – Section 5.56(2)

	Record of Policy Review				
Version	Author	Council Adoption	Resolution	Reason for Review	Review Date
01	Graeme Fardon	29 March 2018	172-17/18	New Policy	
02	Graeme Fardon			Policy Review Project	10/10/2018
03	A&R Committee	20 December 2018	115-18/19	Revised 12/12/2018	
04	Graeme Fardon	17 December 2020	97-20/21	Biennial Policy Review	December 2020
05	Natalie Ness	28 March 2024	172-23/24	Biennial Policy Review	March 2026

ANNEXURE A: PRINCIPLES FOR COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

	Inform	Consult	Involve	Report/Evaluation
Public Participation Goal	To provide the public with timely, balanced and objective information to assist them in understanding the problem alternatives, opportunities and/or solutions	To capture community feedback on analysis, alternatives and or decisions impacting on strategic plans, directions, issues, priorities and projects	To work on an ongoing basis with the community to ensure that community ideas, concerns and aspirations are listened to and understood and that community knowledge is harnessed for the benefit of all.	Council to provide feedback on Shire decisions
Promise to the public	Council is to work with you on an ongoing basis to ensure your ideas, concerns and aspirations are considered. Council is to keep you informed.	Council is to listen to you, consider your ideas and keep you informed and acknowledge concerns and aspirations,	Work directly with the public on an ongoing basis to ensure that your ideas, concerns and aspirations are considered	Council to provide feedback on how public input influenced Council decisions
Example techniques	• Newspapers • Newsletters • Radio • Posters • SMS/email • Website • Facebook • MailChimp • Banksia Bulletin	• Public comment • Focus groups • Surveys biennial (March) • Consultative workshops • Individuals and or Business. • Stakeholders	• Council Committees/Forums • Working groups • User groups • Volunteer groups	• Direct response • Newsletters • SMS/email • Website • Customer Service Survey • Facebook • MailChimp