# Community Engagement

## Action Plan

# Contents

# Introduction

The Shire of Quairading is committed to effective community engagement and open and accountable governance. Council is passionate about the future of the District. Bringing together the needs of the community, our stakeholders and the requirements from government is key to achieving balanced decision-making.

Council makes decisions and takes actions that impact upon the community in different ways. Through effective and inclusive community engagement practices, Council looks to capture the knowledge, experience and aspirations of our community.

This Action Plan describes how the Shire of Quairading will increase its level of engagement with the community and acknowledges the desire of Council to share information in keeping with our vision to position Quairading as the best place to live, work and visit.

Council's Strategic Community Plan 2021-2031 comprises five (5) priorities for our community and is underpinned by actions taken to ensure an effective and sustainable Council.

## Economic Objective: Growing economy and employment opportunities

| | |
|---|---|
| Economic diversity and resilience | Tourism facilities and services |

## Social Objective: Active, healthy, safe and inclusive community

| | |
|---|---|
| Active community | Healthy community |
| Safe community | Inclusive community |

## Built Environment Objective: Planning and infrastructure to meet the needs of the community

| | |
|---|---|
| Responsive Land Use Planning | Enhanced and Sustainably Managed Assets and Infrastructure |

## Natural Environment Objective: To preserve and sustain our natural environment

| | |
|---|---|
| Demonstrated Sustainable Practices | Protected and valued natural areas |

## Governance Objective: Strong governance and community engagement

| | |
|---|---|
| Robust Integrated Planning and Reporting (IPR) | Strengthened Advocacy and Partnerships |
| Community Engagement | Sound Organisation |

# Community Engagement Framework

There are two key Shire of Quairading documents that guide community engagement.

## Strategic Community **Plan**

This document sets out where we are now and the key activities to achieve our community engagement objectives.

## Community Engagement **Policy**

This is an overarching document that sets the standards of community engagement.

# Engage Our Community

Council and its staff seek to ensure that Shire of Quairading community engagement results in an engaged and connected community contributing to our Vision:-

"Our Shire is a place of welcome for all, where we work together, with thriving industry creating jobs, a bright future for our young people, and a bustling town in a beautiful and productive rural setting."

The Action Plan will be assessed and reviewed each June to ensure that community engagement remains focussed and relevant to the Shire of Quairading community and stakeholders.

The Action Plan provides direction to Councillors and staff on identified activities with the objective of maximising meaningful and appropriate community engagement across all areas of the organisation.

# Levels of Engagement

*Extract from CS.4 Community Engagement Policy*

**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** | <ul><li>Newspapers</li><li>Newsletters</li><li>Radio</li><li>Posters</li><li>SMS/email</li><li>Website</li><li>Facebook</li><li>MailChimp</li><li>Banksia Bulletin</li></ul> | <ul><li>Public comment</li><li>Focus groups</li><li>Surveys biennial (March)</li><li>Consultative workshops</li><li>Individuals and or business.</li><li>Stakeholders</li></ul> | <ul><li>Council committees/ Forums</li><li>Working groups</li><li>User groups</li><li>Volunteer groups</li></ul> | <ul><li>Direct response</li><li>Newsletters</li><li>SMS/email</li><li>Website</li><li>Customer Service Survey</li><li>Facebook</li><li>MailChimp</li></ul> |

When planning community engagement activities, Council will determine the most appropriate level of participation required, depending on the nature and complexity of the activity being delivered. These levels may vary for different stages of the activity.

Council will plan community engagement activities in a timely and effective manner, assessing their target audience and developing the most suitable tools and methods of communication to encourage a high level of participation.

It is important to note that there are some areas where community engagement activities may not occur.  These include, but are not limited to health, safety and wellbeing of the community in which Council may need to respond quickly, such as an emergency.
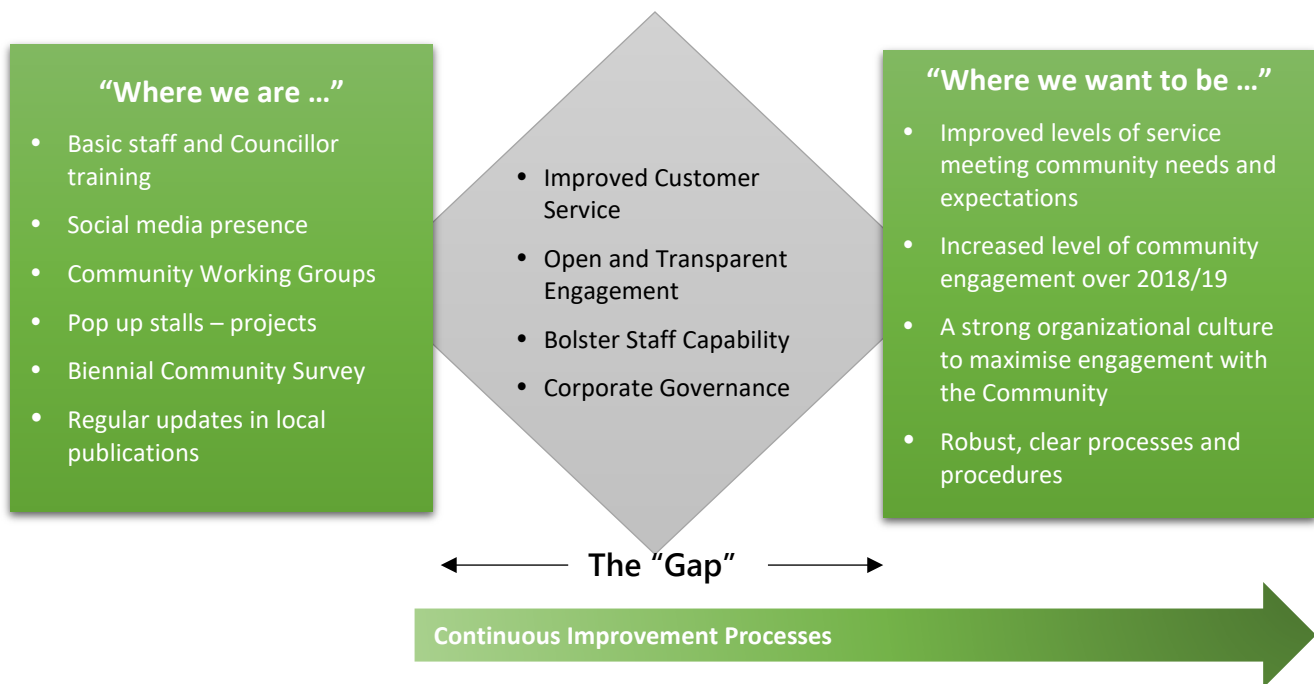
Council also must conform to statutory requirements that may define how Council must engage on certain matters.

# Our Plan for Success

This Plan outlines Council's desire to ensure that community engagement opportunities are both created and embedded into daily Council interactions.

The diagram below outlines our path to successful community engagement.

**"Where we are …"**

- Basic staff and Councillor training
- Social media presence
- Community Working Groups
- Pop up stalls – projects
- Biennial Community Survey
- Regular updates in local publications

- Improved Customer Service
- Open and Transparent Engagement
- Bolster Staff Capability
- Corporate Governance

**"Where we want to be …"**

- Improved levels of service meeting community needs and expectations
- Increased level of community engagement over 2018/19
- A strong organizational culture to maximise engagement with the Community
- Robust, clear processes and procedures

The "Gap"

Continuous Improvement Processes

# How will we achieve this?

To achieve our community engagement objectives, we will focus on the following four key areas:

### Customer Service

- We will ensure our customer service is responsive and easy to deal with.
- Staff adhere to Council's Customer Service Charter, Engagement Policy and Communications Policy.
- Our community will see us as a trusted service provider who is listening to their needs, available and willing to take feedback.

### Open and Transparent Engagement

- We will provide access to information so that the community has the process.
- We value community feedback and will ensure that information is timely and relevant to facilitate sharing ideas and understanding community and stakeholder needs.
- We will show the community how their input has been considered in the outcomes.

### Bolster Staff Capability

- We will have the right training, processes and resources in place to greatly enhance Council's ability to engage effectively.
- We will develop a coordinated approach to internal communication and promote a culture that is proactive.

### Corporate Governance

- We will use a combination of representative and participatory democracy, particularly during the development and review of key strategic plans and development of major projects.

# How We Measure Success

To the Shire of Quairading, successful community engagement results in an engaged, collaborative and informed community.

We acknowledge that every member of the community will have a different view of what successful community engagement looks like.

Council will measure our community engagement success on an annual basis as indicated below:

| Biennial Community Survey | Participation Rate | Social Media Engagement |
|---|---|---|
| ▲80% | ▲50% | ▲300 + |
| satisfaction with overall community consultation about key decision | feedback submissions | unique engagement reach on Council's Facebook posts |

# 1. Customer Service

- We will ensure our customer service is responsive, timely and solution-focused.
- Staff adhere to Council's Customer Service Charter, Engagement Policy and Communications Policy.
- Our community will see us as a trusted service provider who is listening to their needs, available and willing to take feedback.

| Action | Detail | 2023 | 2024 | 2025 | 2026 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Develop and implement Customer Service Charter and Standards** | A Customer Service Charter and Standards will outline Council's commitment to our community in customer service. To be reviewed annually. | | | ✓ | |
| **Implement a Customer Service System** | The Customer Service System is designed to record and track customer requests coming from outside as well as within your organisation, and digitize workflow for improved customer feedback and reporting. The new Altus software (implemented in 2022) will improve you system dramatically, leaving no option but to respond to customer requests in a timely and effective manner. | | | ✓ | ✓ |
| **Develop a new community brand** | A new brand provides a consistent look and feel across all promotional and communication material that invites our community to participate in Council's engagement activities.<br><br>Annual review of Corporate Style Guide. | | | | ✓ |
| **MailChimp** | Staff have established email groups (i.e. lists of people interested in a particular issue) e.g. Caravan Clubs, Business houses, Sporting Clubs, LEMC, Fire Control Officers. | ✓ | | | |
| **Facebook** | Staff are using analytics to target the customer and type of messaging. | ✓ | ✓ | | |

# 2. Open and Transparent Engagement

- We will provide access to information so that the community has the opportunity to contribute to and/or understand the decision-making process.

- We value community feedback and will ensure that information is timely and relevant to facilitate sharing ideas and understanding community and stakeholder needs.

- We will show the community how their input has been considered in the outcomes.

| Action | Detail | 2023 | 2024 | 2025 | 2026 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Improve Council's website** | Review and upgrade Council's website to incorporate interactive functionality and improve flexibility. Increase capability for website visitors to provide feedback to Council. | ✓ | ✓ | | |
| **Improve Council's social media activity** | Train staff to contribute to real time social media activity to provide our community with 'on the spot' Council updates in the field. | ✓ | ✓ | | |
| **Include community engagement plans in Council reports** | Summarise community engagement plans in Council reports. | | | ✓ | |
| **Utilise the opportunity of the Annual Report to provide meaningful reporting to our community** | Use the Annual Report opportunity to demonstrate strong accountability and public value for our community with trend data and robust reporting. Improve the layout and content of the Annual Report. | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ |
| **Distribute a quarterly grants bulletin** | Helping our community groups, clubs and businesses find the latest funding opportunities through targeted grants emails and Mailchimp. | | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ |
| **Access to Council minutes & agendas** | Council minutes and agendas available on the Shire Website for Community information and use. | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ |
| **Increased community feedback** | Monkey Survey and MailChimp enable a more flexible approach to short community surveys as and when required | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ |

# 3. Bolster Staff Capability

- We will have the right training, processes and resources in place to greatly enhance Council's ability to engage effectively.

- We will develop a coordinated approach to internal communication and promote a culture that is proactive.

| Action | Detail | 2023 | 2024 | 2025 | 2026 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Provide ongoing training and support for staff** | Ongoing training provided to staff to increase knowledge of our engagement process and to build internal capacity to deliver robust engagement activities across Council.<br><br>Executive Management Team to ensure that community engagement principles are utilised in all areas of the organisation. | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ |
| **Develop engagement champions** | Guide and mentor staff responsible for projects and activities to improve the quality and level of engagement. | | | ✓ | |
| **Communication and community engagement policies** | Review of Policies – Ongoing as part of the Governance Calendar. | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ |

# 4. Corporate Governance

- We will use a combination of representative and participatory democracy in the development and review of key strategic plans and development of major projects.

| Action | Detail | 2023 | 2024 | 2025 | 2026 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Utilise community groups to guide the development of key strategic plans and major projects** | The development of key strategic plans will be supported by the establishment of community reference groups to ensure the inclusion of community perspective. | | | ✓ | ✓ |
| **Open invitation community workshops** | Open invitation workshop designed to gather people from a community together to discuss a specific project or process. May be a remote process to accommodate the shifting paradigm in community consultation. | | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ |
| **Promote integrated planning of engagement and communications** | Develop an internal engagement calendar to assist in planning engagement activities to avoid duplication of engagement activities and identify areas where combining community engagements can be carried out to reduce community consultation fatigue. | | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ |
| **Frequent and consistent communication** | Communication to all staff about their objectives and responsibilities must be ongoing (through regular staff meetings), consistent and part of all senior management communication to staff including in everyday situations.<br><br>Structure of staff meeting to be changed to focus on areas such as customer service levels, communications and engagement opportunities. | | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ |
| **An ethical and values-based culture** | Excellent leadership must be supported by a strong organisational culture. Clear and ongoing communication about the Shire's governance requirements needs to be coupled with strategies that encourage cultural change within the organisation where required.<br><br>Engagement principles to be embedded in the Executive Management Team discussions. | | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ |