



City of Cockburn

# Community Engagement Framework

February 2019

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# 1. Our Commitment

This Policy Framework sets out the City's commitment to engage with the community and stakeholders on decisions which impact on them.

It provides a structure and process for initiation, development, adoption and review of the City's community engagement practice based on:

- Placing value on the insight provided by stakeholders
- Council as the ultimate decision maker
- Making better decisions which take into account the interests and concerns of potentially affected people and organisations.

This Framework applies to all employees and consultants engaged by the City. It is based on the International Association of Public Participation (IAP2) model, which is the peak body for community engagement worldwide. It should be read in conjunction with the City's Community Engagement Policy.

## Our Commitment

For residents and stakeholders, we are committed to providing opportunities to have a say, in a way that meets your needs and to participate in the decision-making process.

Our commitment:

- Is based on the belief that those who are affected by a decision have a right to be involved in the decision-making process.
- Includes the promise that the community's contribution will be considered in making the decision.
- Promotes sustainable decisions by recognising and communicating the needs and interests of all participants, including decision makers.
- Seeks out the involvement of those potentially affected by or interested in a decision.
- Seeks input from participants in designing how they participate.
- Provides participants with the information they need to participate in a meaningful way.
- Communicates to participants how their input affected the decision.

(Based on the IAP2 Core Values)

For decision makers, including Elected Members, it means also having evidence in the form of a consultation report outlining the facts, figures and sentiment of the community impacted by a decision. This allows decisions to be made based on local knowledge, issues important to residents and to get a wider range of opinions on a matter.

For staff, it is also a commitment that the City will liaise with internal stakeholders to communicate proposals for change and seek the context and history of a project before starting external consultation.

## 2. What is Community Engagement?

Community engagement is a **planned process** with the **specific purpose** of working across organisations, stakeholders and communities to help **shape the City's decisions** or actions in relation to a **problem**, opportunity or outcome. (Based on IAP2 definition)

As shown in bold, the defining elements of the engagement include:

- Planned process
- Purposeful
- Helping shape decisions and actions of communities and/or organisations
- Recognition that there will be a decision at the end of the consultation, and an action.

The word “community” defines individuals and groups of people, stakeholders, interest groups and resident groups – a geographic location, a community of practice or an industry or sporting club.

The word “stakeholder” defines individuals, group of individuals, organisations or entity with a specific stake in the outcome of a decision.

Community engagement is not about:

- promising to meet community needs and expectations all the time, because decision-makers cannot keep everyone happy all the time
- consulting on every single decision because this may not be feasible due to time constraints, budget restrictions or other factors
- assuming that everyone in the community will want to be engaged all of the time on every issue
- consulting on a decision that has already been made

To **external stakeholders**, community engagement means:

Communicating well with the community; making people aware of local issues that affect their lives

Providing the community with opportunities to have a say about what is considered to be important, if and when wanted

Connecting people together to improve lives, to help progress the City and create a harmonious and healthy environment

Being actively involved in activities and decision-making about where and how people live, work and play

To **internal stakeholders**, community engagement means:

Effective information flow

Having a say on changes to programs that they will deliver

Hearing about the community's values, needs and attitudes towards projects, developments and issues

Process of getting the community more involved in the local area, building networks and relationships

### 3. IAP2 Spectrum of Public Participation

The City considers the impact of the project from the stakeholder’s viewpoint, acknowledging that some people will want higher involvement in the consultation than others. The IAP2 Spectrum of Public Participation depicts five levels of influence that the community can have on an outcome or decision. From Inform to Empower, the Spectrum sets out goals and suggested promises to the community for each level. For some projects, we wish to inform residents about a new activity or service, and on others we seek far more involvement. Engagement can be led by the community or organization.

The City does not prescribe a single approach to engagement. Rather, officers should determine the appropriate approach for engagement, based on the context of the project, the scope of engagement, the people involved, the principles and level of influence.

#### IAP2’S PUBLIC PARTICIPATION SPECTRUM



The IAP2 Federation has developed the Spectrum to help groups define the public’s role in any public participation process. The IAP2 Spectrum is quickly becoming an international standard.

		INCREASING IMPACT ON THE DECISION 				
		INFORM	CONSULT	INVOLVE	COLLABORATE	EMPOWER
PUBLIC PARTICIPATION GOAL		To provide the public with balanced and objective information to assist them in understanding the problem, alternatives, opportunities and/or solutions.	To obtain public feedback on analysis, alternatives and/or decisions.	To work directly with the public throughout the process to ensure that public concerns and aspirations are consistently understood and considered.	To partner with the public in each aspect of the decision including the development of alternatives and the identification of the preferred solution.	To place final decision making in the hands of the public.
	PROMISE TO THE PUBLIC	We will keep you informed.	We will keep you informed, listen to and acknowledge concerns and aspirations, and provide feedback on how public input influenced the decision.	We will work with you to ensure that your concerns and aspirations are directly reflected in the alternatives developed and provide feedback on how public input influenced the decision.	We will look to you for advice and innovation in formulating solutions and incorporate your advice and recommendations into the decisions to the maximum extent possible.	We will implement what you decide.

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## 4. Know your stakeholders

The City makes a commitment to provide equity in opportunities for people with diverse needs and views to participate fully in engagement activities. With more than 110,000 residents, the City must ensure its engagement is demographically representative of the age, culture, locality and family composition of its community.

The City is committed to consulting with subject matter experts such as Aboriginal people, culturally and linguistically diverse people, seniors, youth and people with disability. The City values the diversity of the people in our community and understands that through respectful and genuine relationships we can learn from each other.

It also strongly relies on residents groups to provide input on local issues.

### 4.1 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander People

As a statement of commitment, the City acknowledges the Nyungar people as the Traditional Custodians of this land. We commit to engaging with the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community and the Aboriginal Reference Group.

Providing leadership in strengthening relationships with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people is important to the City in developing an inclusive, strong and healthy community.

The City is committed to implementing the Reconciliation Action Plan actions relating to community engagement.

### 4.2 Culturally and linguistically diverse stakeholders

The City has a culturally and linguistically diverse community. Historically the City had significant populations of Italians, Croatian, German and Portuguese people, while immigrants over the past five years have largely come from China, India and the Philippines.

The City is committed to consulting with its diverse communities, with interpreters available on request and translation of material into different languages.

## 4.3 Stakeholders with disability

Based on the City's Disability Access and Inclusion Plan, any planned community engagement must:

- Develop strategies to ensure community engagement is inclusive of people with disability.
- Promote community engagements using a range of media, considering the needs of people with disability.
- Ensure staff and contractors involved in community engagement are aware of alternative communication strategies

The City will use co-design methods to better understand and improve people's experiences of services as well as the services themselves.

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