

Council Policy



Community Engagement Policy

Introduction

The policy confirms Corangamite Shire Council's commitment to community and stakeholder engagement.

Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to ensure that Council's engagement with the community is appropriate, adequate, consistent and follows the steps outlined in the 'Corangamite Shire Tools for Engagement' Toolkit.

The policy also ensures Council is meeting its obligations with the *Local Government Act 1989*, which stipulates Council must take into account the diverse needs of the local community in decision making and that it must develop a program of regular consultation.

Scope

The policy applies to all staff, contractors and Councillors at Corangamite Shire who undertake engagement with the community as part of their position with Council.

"It is considered that this Policy does not impact negatively on any rights identified in the *Charter of Human Rights Act (2006)*".

Definitions

Council – Corangamite Shire Council

References

Corangamite Shire Council 'Tools for Engagement' Toolkit

The following pieces of legislation mandate engagement for local governments.

- *Local Government Act 1989*
- *Planning and Environment Act 1987*
- *Public Health and Wellbeing Act 2008*
- *Road Management Act 2004*
- *Equal Opportunity Act 2010*
- *Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities Act 2006*

Policy Detail

Community engagement is fundamental to both service delivery and community development. Effective engagement involves appropriate, productive communication between Council, residents and other relevant stakeholders.

Community engagement can take many forms and levels and should be considered when:

- a proposed decision could impact on the community regarding a Council service or facility
- there is a perceived level of controversy, sensitivity or conflict regarding an issue
- Council requires feedback from the community regarding their needs or priorities
- Council is setting its strategic direction
- a proposed change could affect the entitlements or rights the community
- Council needs to monitor satisfaction provided with a Council facility or service.

There may be occasions where Council does not consult with the community due to emergency actions, safety reasons, legal compliance, commercial in confidence arrangements, privacy protection or other matters as determined by Council. The reasons as to why this course of action has occurred will still be communicated back to the community, where possible, at an appropriate time.

To provide clarity regarding the various levels and requirements regarding community engagement, Council developed the Corangamite Shire Council 'Tools for Engagement' Toolkit.

The Toolkit provides Council with a comprehensive framework for consistent approaches to community engagement and development across its operations.

It describes outcomes and directions, commitments to engagement by Council, details the stakeholder engagement spectrum and the different levels of engagement that can be undertaken, provides ways to incorporate community engagement into Council processes as well as tools and resources to enhance engagement practices.

Through Council's commitment to community engagement, the community can be confident that:

- they will be provided with the information that they need to participate in engagement in a meaningful way
- those affected by an issue will be sought out to ensure effective engagement is completed
- diversity of all ages, abilities and cultures will be recognised and included in decision-making processes
- all contributions will be considered and Council will report back to those involved in the engagement process to complete the information loop as to why decisions are made
- Final outcomes will be communicated to the community.

Reference to linked Procedure or Guidelines, if applicable

Corangamite Shire Council 'Tools for Engagement' Toolkit

Review Date

June 2018.