

## COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

### Council Policy

<b>Policy Name:</b> Community Engagement	<b>Policy Number:</b> POL-0050-V04
<b>Date Adopted:</b> 31 March 2017	<b>Review Date:</b> 31 March 2020
<b>Policy Owner:</b> Executive Manager / Public Officer	

#### 1. Policy Statement/Objective(s)

Community engagement is an important part of Council's role in the planning and delivery of services and facilities as we work towards achieving the Community's long-term Vision for Shellharbour City. Shellharbour City Council is committed to ensuring the community is actively involved in Council decision-making and activities, and implements engagement strategies that are appropriate and responsive to the needs of its diverse community.

The Community Engagement Policy will assist Council in achieving community Objectives and priorities that are defined in the Community Strategic Plan 2013-2023.

Objective 4.1 Led by a Council that effectively represents the community  
Strategy 4.1.2 Facilitate good communication and relationships with our community

Council is committed to:

- Better understanding the needs of the community
- Recognising local knowledge and expertise
- Enabling community participation in decision making
- Ensuring the community is informed, educated and aware; and
- Meeting the requirements of the Local Government Act, legislation, policies and procedures

#### 2. Scope

This policy provides a framework that underpins Council's engagement activities. It applies to all Councillors and Council staff; it defines the roles and responsibilities of in engaging with the community and suggests the mechanisms for engagement.

The policy is informed by the internationally recognised 'Public Participation Spectrum' developed by the International Association for Public Participation (IAP2) which outlines various levels of participation. When planning for community engagement Council staff will need to determine the most appropriate level of participation depending on the nature and complexity of the project/issue.

Council will commonly conduct formal community engagement processes at the "inform, consult and involve" stages:

- Inform – dissemination of information only
- Consult – requires feedback from parts of the community
- Involve – requires comprehensive feedback from a wide range of stakeholders.

A comprehensive understanding of the spectrum can be found in the Community Engagement Toolkit.

### 3. References

Community Engagement Toolkit  
 Report of Commissioner Richard Colley into Shellharbour City Council, July 2008  
 NSW Ombudsman Annual Report 2007-2008  
 Local Government Act  
 Shellharbour Development Control Plan previously known as Notifications Development Control Plan (DCP 10/98)  
 Submissions, Petitions and Form Letters Policy  
 Complaints Management Policy  
 Code of Meeting Practice  
 Cultural Diversity Policy  
 GIPA (Public Access) Act 2009 (NSW)

### 4. Definitions

Community – refers to the people who live, work, visit and/or own property or businesses in the Shellharbour LGA.

Community Engagement - Community engagement refers to the processes and practices that Council uses to:

- inform the community
- gather feedback from the community; and
- work with the community to implement a range of projects/programs/services

Stakeholder – is a person or group that has an interest or stake in an issue or project

### 5. Variation and Review

Council reserves the right to review, vary or revoke this policy.

#### Review History

Date Policy first adopted – Version 1	19 May 2009
Date amendment adopted – Version 2	30 August 2011
Date amendment adopted - Version 3	29 April 2014
Reviewed with minor changes not requiring re-adoption – Version 4	31 March 2017

### 6. Policy

6.1 Shellharbour City Council recognises the need for a comprehensive and transparent approach to community engagement. This will ensure that the community of the Shellharbour local government area (LGA) has the opportunity to be actively involved in decisions on plans, projects, policies and services that impact on residents, ratepayers and other stakeholders.

It must be recognised that Council performs many routine activities on a daily basis, and this policy is not intended to cover every task. Rather, it applies to broader decision-making about strategies, plans, policies, projects and service delivery.

Council acknowledges that engagement is a process to gather opinions and ideas. It does not guarantee agreement between all parties. However, by engaging the community early and effectively in a project, there is a far greater chance of fostering community “ownership”, and of achieving a positive outcome for the majority of stakeholders.

Council also recognises that views gathered through engagement should be representative of a broad cross section of the community, and that to be effectively engaged, community members need appropriate information and time to respond. The Community Engagement Policy has been developed with due consideration of the NSW social justice principles of equity, access, participation and rights, as set out in Council's Community Strategic Plan.

#### Roles and Responsibilities

Councillors and Council staff play complementary roles in engaging with the community.

The Elected Council is responsible for:

- Ensuring that community engagement directly informs Council decisions.
- Supporting and encouraging community engagement appropriate to the needs of the project and/or issue
- Providing adequate funding and/or resources to support engagement activities

Council Staff are responsible for:

- Ensuring this policy is appropriately implemented and applied
- Providing opportunities for community participation
- Reporting outcomes

The community has a role in supporting the principles of community engagement. The community is encouraged to actively participate in engagement activities and contribute to Council's decision making processes.

#### **Engagement Processes**

Council's community engagement framework consists of the following documents:

##### Community Engagement Policy

This policy provides the foundation for all community engagement activities.

##### Community Engagement Toolkit

These documents provide methods and guidelines to ensure a global approach to community engagement. The toolkit provides a comprehensive overview of processes that are informed by the IAP2 engagement model and includes information on planning and reporting engagement activities.

## **Partnerships**

As an integral part of this policy Council is committed in fostering partnerships between all levels of government, businesses, community organisations and importantly the community.

### **7. Related Forms**

Nil

**Note: Related forms can be located Online under “Forms”**

### **8. Attachments:**

Nil

### **Policy Authorised by:**

Name: Ordinary Council Resolution No 107

Date: 29 April 2014