

Policy number	Policy 103
Policy title	Communication and Engagement
Strategic outcomes supported	S2 – An informed and knowledgeable community. CL1 – Everyone receives appropriate information in the most efficient way for them. CL2 – A community that is authentically engaged and informed in a timely manner.

POLICY OBJECTIVE:

This policy aims to:

- align communication and engagement activity with the use of stakeholder analysis tools, to identify those most affected and consider their views as well as the diverse views of the wider community
- ensure communication and engagement is proactively planned around Town projects, services and issues to achieve inclusive and meaningful outcomes
- improve communication and engagement value and consistency across the organisation
- increase the timeliness and effectiveness of communication and engagement internally and externally
- increase community confidence in the Town’s management of information sharing and decision making.

POLICY SCOPE:

This policy applies to elected members, staff, contractors, consultants, working groups and committees of Council who are working on any project or program that requires the Town to engage (inform, consult, involve and/or partner) with the community.

This policy addresses the key elements of both communication and engagement and outlines the Town’s objectives to deliver timely, meaningful and appropriate communication and engagement opportunities, to keep people informed and show when and how stakeholders have contributed to decisions and outcomes. The Town is guided by the International Association of Public Participation (IAP2) principles and core values.

DEFINITIONS:

Nil.

POLICY STATEMENT:

1. The Town is committed to clear, consistent and timely communications, providing stakeholders with opportunities to be informed, consulted and engaged to contribute to the decisions made by Council on matters that affect them. This entails:
 - a. open, timely and transparent communication using plain English
 - b. communicating and engaging in a thoroughly planned and tailored manner

- c. communicating both good and bad news quickly, even if the full impact of the decision or message may not be clear
 - d. recognising those who are affected by a decision have a right to be involved in the decision-making process
 - e. letting participants choose how they receive information or participate
 - f. closing the loop by communicating to participants how their input supported a decision or outcome
 - g. providing participants with the information they need to participate in a meaningful way
 - h. building positive relationships between Council and the community.
2. Each project or issue will have varying constraints and resource implications, and various levels of potential stakeholder influence, with a need for flexibility to move up and down the [IAP2 Spectrum](#) as plans are implemented.
3. Where Council decision making is involved, the Chief Executive Officer will:
 - a. identify the communication and engagement opportunities
 - b. determine the appropriate level of communication and engagement
 - c. determine and implement the communication and engagement methods
 - d. provide communication and engagement outcome summaries in Council Reports
 - e. support the Town to achieve compliance with statutory requirements.
4. Elected Members ensure community engagement outcomes are taken into account in the decision-making process of Council.
5. Stakeholder feedback is one part of the information gathering process upon which decisions are based. Other information which may be taken into account includes technical advice, legal advice, third-party expert advice and other stakeholder advice as necessary.
6. As one of the Town's roles is advocacy, there may be circumstances where engagement is not undertaken by the Town, such as major infrastructure projects delivered by the State or Federal Government.
7. When a decision is mandatory, Council shall comply with statutory requirements, such as for strategic planning documents or Development Applications – refer to LLPP37 Community Consultation on Planning Proposals.

IAP2 Spectrum

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 problems, alternatives, opportunities and/or solution	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 seek your feedback on drafts and proposals.	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 work together with you to formulate solutions and incorporate your advice and recommendations into the decisions to the maximum extent possible.	We will implement what you decide.
Example methods				
Fact sheets Website Newsletters Info sessions Social Media	Public comment Online portal Surveys Interviews Quick Polls	Workshops Focus Groups Community Reference Groups	Advisory Committees Community Panel Participatory budgeting	Citizens' Jury Ballots Delegation decisions

Source <https://www.iap2.org.au/Home>

RELATED DOCUMENTS:

Practice 103.1 Communications and Engagement

Local Planning Policy - LPP37 - Community Consultation on Planning Proposals

