

<b>Policy Title:</b>	<b>COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT POLICY</b>
Policy Subject:	Community
Policy No:	#1896552v8 – CP040
Directorate:	Development & Community
Department:	Community & Economy
Section:	Community Development & Engagement
Responsible Officer:	Executive Manager – Community & Economy
Authorised by:	Director Development & Community
Adopted Date:	07/04/10
Review Date:	27/03/2022
Amended Date:	27/03/2019
Risk Assessment:	Low

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**OBJECTIVE:**

This Policy formalises Council’s approach to engaging the Fraser Coast community and stakeholders through the use of appropriate, effective and inclusive practices.

**POLICY:**

Council’s Community Engagement Policy supports the Goals as outlined in the Fraser Coast Regional Council Corporate Plan 2018-2023.

- To be a diverse, strong and well governed region of vibrant places, with an innovative and diverse economy and connected as a whole by our community spirit and respect for our natural environment.
- To make a positive difference for the region and the lives of our community members by ensuring we provide a service that is forward looking and well managed.

This Policy is consistent with the Local Government Act 2009 s4 (a) to ensure that local government is accountable, effective, efficient and sustainable; and Local Government Principles s4(2) which provide for:

- Transparent and effective processes, and decision-making in the public interest; and
  - Sustainable development and management of assets and infrastructure, and delivery of effective services; and
  - Democratic representation, social inclusion and meaningful community engagement, and
  - Good governance of, and by, local government; and
  - Ethical and legal behaviour of councillors and local government employees.
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**SCOPE**

Community engagement refers to the broad manner in which the views, aspirations and values of the community are communicated to ensure they are effectively able to inform, influence and assist in the decision-making of Council.

A suite of methods and techniques are available to ensure that community engagement and participation is effective. This policy seeks to create the framework in which these operate and sets the direction for the policy's implementation.

The range and scope of decisions made by Council is broad, involving various degrees of complexity and requiring varying levels of expertise and accountability.

Community engagement will take place when in the opinion of Council officers or the elected Council:

- The views of individuals or groups within our community will provide further information valuable to the planning, solution or decision;
- The issue will significantly affect existing levels of service;
- The issue is complex or controversial;
- The issue will have long term impact on the community; or
- When it is a legislative requirement

**DEFINITIONS**

The following definitions have been provided to assist with the interpretation and implementation of this policy:

**Community:** Includes all of the people who live, work, study, own property, conduct private, community or government business, visit or use the services, facilities and public spaces and places of the Fraser Coast local government area.

**Stakeholders:** Those people and groups who have a particular interest or who are impacted by a project or initiative.

**Engagement:** The processes and relationships that enable the stakeholders and community to contribute and be involved in Council's service planning, policy and strategy development and project implementation.

**GUIDING PRINCIPLES**

In order to engage the community most effectively, authentically and fairly, Council commits to the following principles:

**Timeliness:** Council will engage with its community in ways that are timely, open to all, easily understood and not overly bureaucratic or resource intensive

**Informative:** The community has the right to accurate, accessible and timely information in order to engage in a meaningful way.

Stakeholders and communities of interest: The relevant stakeholders are included/involved in the engagement processes.

Purposeful engagement: Council will articulate the purpose of the engagement and how contributions will be used for the decision making or project implementation.

Transparency: Council will clarify who will be making the decision, how the decision will be made, the level of influence by the community and the criteria or guiding principles to be used.

Inclusiveness: Council will create a diversity of approaches to encourage involvement from a wide cross-section of the community, respecting diversity of opinion, ensuring balanced input and using engagement processes that are accessible and inclusive.

Accountability: Council undertakes community engagement to enhance its decision making, however Council accepts that it is ultimately responsible and therefore accountable for the decisions it makes

Feedback: The community has the right to receive feedback from Council on how its input has been used to inform council decisions.

Continuous improvement: Council will evaluate engagement activities where possible and appropriate in order to improve Council's ongoing engagement practices.

#### **AUTHORITIES & RESPONSIBILITIES**

This Policy applies to Councillors, staff, volunteers, consultants and contractors and duly convened advisory committees or task forces.

#### **HEAD OF POWER:**

Local Government Act 2009

#### **RELATED LEGISLATION:**

Nil

#### **RELATED DOCUMENTS (LOCAL LAWS, POLICIES, DELEGATIONS, ETC):**

- Fraser Coast Regional Council Community Engagement Practice Framework (2018)
- IPA2 Public Participation Spectrum

#### **ATTACHMENTS TO POLICY:**

Nil

