

Strategic Outcome Supported: 11 – Strong, Visionary Leadership

OBJECTIVE

1. To establish the Shire's commitment to meaningful, inclusive and transparent community engagement that supports informed decision-making and strengthens community trust and confidence. This policy provides the overarching principles and governance for community engagement undertaken by the Shire.

SCOPE

2. This policy applies to all community engagement undertaken by the Shire. It applies to Council, employees and any person acting on behalf of the Shire. The policy establishes the principles and governance for community engagement and is supported by the Community Engagement Framework and associated operational procedures.

DEFINITIONS

3. **CEO** means Chief Executive Office.
4. **Community Engagement** means the process of involving community members and stakeholders in decision-making, planning, projects, services or matters that may affect them or be of interest to them.
5. **Community Engagement Framework** means the Shire's supporting document that guides the planning, delivery, evaluation and reporting of community engagement activities across the organisation.
6. **Community Engagement Toolkit** means the supporting templates, tools and guidance used by employees to plan, deliver, evaluate and report on community engagement activities.
7. **Consultation** means a process where the Shire seeks feedback from the community or stakeholders on a matter before a decision is made.
8. **Council** means the elected Council of the Shire of Donnybrook Balingup.
9. **Employee** means any person employed by the Shire, including permanent, part-time, casual, voluntary or contract staff.
10. **Engagement activity** means any planned process used to inform, consult, involve or collaborate with the community or stakeholders.
11. **Shire** means Shire of Donnybrook Balingup.
12. **Stakeholder** means any person, group, organisation, business or body that may be affected by, interested in, or able to influence a Shire decision, project, service or activity.
13. **Closing the loop** means communicating the outcomes of engagement back to Council, participants and/or the broader community, including how feedback was considered and, where appropriate, why some feedback could not be acted on.

POLICY STATEMENTS

14. The Shire recognises that effective community engagement contributes to better decisions, stronger relationships and improved services, projects and strategies. Community engagement will be undertaken in a manner that is proportionate to the nature, scale and impact of the matter being considered.

The Shire is committed to community engagement that is:

- a. Inclusive and accessible.
- b. Transparent and timely.
- c. Respectful of differing views.
- d. Accountable and responsive.
- e. Focused on continuous improvement.

Principles

15. When undertaking community engagement, the Shire will work to the following principles:
- a. Provide reasonable opportunities for affected and interested stakeholders to participate in decision-making processes.
 - b. Use engagement methods appropriate to the level of community impact and available resources.
 - c. Ensure information is clear, accessible and provided in a timely manner.
 - d. Consider community feedback alongside legislative requirements, strategic priorities, financial considerations and other relevant factors.
 - e. Communicate the outcomes of engagement and explain how feedback was considered in decision-making.
 - f. Review and improve engagement practices through evaluation and organisational learning.

Roles and Responsibilities

- 16. Council is responsible for establishing this Policy, considering community views and taking those views into account when making decisions.
- 17. The Chief Executive Officer is responsible for ensuring appropriate systems, resources and processes are in place to support effective community engagement across the organisation.
- 18. Employees are responsible for applying the Community Engagement Framework, associated procedures and supporting tools when planning and delivering engagement activities.

Community Engagement Framework

- 19. The CEO will maintain a Community Engagement Framework and supporting procedures, tools and templates to guide the planning, delivery, evaluation and reporting of engagement activities across the organisation.

DELEGATION AND AUTHORISATION

20. Nil.

LEGISLATION

- Local Government Act 1995

APPENDIX

21. Nil.

GOVERNANCE

Related Policy(s):

- Organisational Risk Management (EXE/CP-6)
- Official Communications (EXE/CP-14)

Related Procedure and Plans(s):

- Council Plan
- Disability Access and Inclusion Plan
- Customer Service Charter
- Risk Management Framework
- Community Engagement Framework

Revision Requirements and Version Control:

Responsible Department(s):		Finance and Community		
Review to be conducted by:		Senior Community Economic Development Officer		
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