

CUMBERLAND
CITY COUNCIL

Community Engagement Policy

AUTHORISATION & VERSION CONTROL

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PURPOSE

The Community Engagement Policy is an expression of Council's commitment to engaging with the Cumberland Community on matters that affect them. This Policy outlines Council's position, role and commitment to ensure community engagement is integrated into Council activities to support decision making, build relationships and strengthen our communities.

Council recognises that a clear standard of engagement should be undertaken that is appropriate with the nature, complexity and level of impact of the issues or project involved. This Policy outlines the principles and commitments that will guide the planning, design, implementation and evaluation of community engagement practices at Council as supported by operational procedures and documentation.

SCOPE

The Community Engagement Policy will be applied at the planning stage of projects and Council led initiatives in relation to a problem, opportunity or outcome.

Community engagement is the responsibility of all Council service areas, teams and employees. It also applies to contractors and consultants undertaking engagement on behalf of Council.

This Policy also acknowledges the role of Councillors as holding a statutory liaison function between the Council and the Community.

DEFINITIONS

Communication	The exchange of information between the Council, community and internal or external stakeholders.
Community	Community refers to the people who have a stake and interest in the Cumberland Local Government Area (LGA) and includes, people who: <ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Live, work, study or conduct business or are involved in local community groups or organisations in Council's LGA.▪ Visit, use or enjoy the services, facilities and public places located within Council's LGA.
Community Engagement	Where the community can influence, or are affected by a decision of Council, they will be encouraged to provide feedback, and participate in a variety of engagement methods as part of the decision making process.
Stakeholder	Business representatives, associations, other levels of government and government agencies who have an interest or are impacted by the decisions of Council.

POLICY STATEMENT

Council is committed to engaging with the community and stakeholders through engagement processes that are conducted in an open, transparent and consistent manner to foster collaboration, cooperation, and increase the community's understanding and involvement in the issues that affect them.

Council will seek ongoing community input in designing how the public will participate, and commits to continuous improvement by reviewing and evaluating engagement processes.

PRINCIPLES

The Community Engagement Policy is built upon the Core Values and Code of Ethics created by the International Association for Public Participation (IAP2).



The following values underpin Council's commitment to the community and guide the planning, development, implementation, evaluation and continuous improvement of community engagement processes undertaken by Council.

IAP2 Core Values	Our commitment to our community
Community engagement is based on the belief that those who are affected by a decision have a right to be involved in the decision making process.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• We support community engagement as a process to make better decisions that incorporate the interests and concerns of all affected stakeholders and meet the needs of the decision making body.
Community engagement includes the promise that the community's contribution will influence the decision.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• We will undertake and encourage actions that build trust and credibility for the process among all the participants.• We will enhance the community's participation in the decision making process and assist decision makers in being responsive to the community's concerns and suggestions.
Community engagement promotes sustainable decisions by recognising and communicating the needs and interests of all participants, including decision makers.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• We will carefully consider and accurately portray the community's role in the decision making process.
Community engagement seeks out and facilitates the involvement of those potentially affected by or interested in a decision.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• We will encourage the disclosure of all information relevant to the community's understanding and evaluation of a decision.
Community engagement seeks input from participants in designing how they participate	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• We will ensure that stakeholders have fair and equal access to the community engagement process and the opportunity to influence decisions.

Community engagement provides participants with the information they need to participate in a meaningful way.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We will advocate for community engagement processes and will not advocate for interest, party, or project outcome.
Community engagement communicates to participants how their input affected the decision.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We ensure that all commitments made to our community, including those by the decision maker, are made in good faith. • We will communicate back to participants about how their input affected a decision. • We will support and educate the community about the value and use of community engagement.

REQUIREMENTS

Council acknowledges that projects or matters affecting the community will go through an engagement process, the method and purpose will be consistent with the IAP2 Public Participation Spectrum (as outlined in the following table) in addition to any statutory requirements.

	Inform Lower level of Engagement 		Involve Mid level of Engagement 		Empower High level of Engagement
	Inform	Consult	Involve	Collaborate	Empower
Goal	We will provide the community with balanced and objective information to assist them in understanding the problem, alternatives, opportunities and/or solutions.	We will obtain public feedback on analysis, alternatives and/or decisions.	We will work with you throughout the process to ensure that your concerns and aspirations are consistently understood and considered.	We will work together with you in each aspect of the decision including the development of alternatives and the identification of the preferred solution.	We will help work towards the level of capacity to help the community lead and decide on a matter.
Role of the community	Listen	Contribute	Participate	Partner	Lead
Level of relevant engagement	E.g. Projects by the State Government that affect the local community.	E.g. Participating in an online engagement activity on Council's Have Your Say website.	E.g. Providing input to develop options for an infrastructure project for Cumberland.	E.g. When developing a long-term vision and strategic plan.	E.g. Building capacity skills of small business employees through skills-based training or community members joining the advisory committees which directly influence change.
Examples of engagement methods	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Advertisement • Fact sheet • Newsletter • Social media • Website 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Focus groups • Public exhibition • Surveys 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Workshops 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Participatory decision making • Co-design 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Council advisory committees

RELATED LEGISLATION

- Local Government Act 1993
- Local Government Amendment (Governance and Planning) Bill 2016
- Environmental Planning and Assessment (EPA) Act 1979
- State Records Act 1998
- Government Information (Public Access) Act 2009
- Privacy and Personal Information Protection Act 1998

RELATED COUNCIL POLICY

- Access and Equity Policy
- Access to Information Policy
- Records Management Policy
- Cumberland City Council Planning Proposal Notification Policy