

| PUBLIC CONSULTATION AND ENGAGEMENT POLICY | |
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| Statutory Policy | |
| TRIM Reference | AR19/18761[v2] |
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1. POLICY STATEMENT

- 1.1 This Policy confirms the Council's commitment to open, accountable and responsible decision making based on the core values of the International Association for Public Participation (iap2) and the South Australian Government's *Better Together Principles of Engagement*. It also confirms Council's commitment to facilitate effective consultation with its community and encourages community involvement through partnerships in planning and decision-making. The Policy sets out the steps Council will take in relation to public consultation, and ensures that the most cost effective method of informing and involving the community and identifies the objective of the engagement and the suitable level of engagement according to the *iap2 public participation spectrum*.

2. PURPOSE

2.1 Purpose

The purpose of this Policy is to set out the ways in which the community can be involved in governance and decision making, through an effective public consultation process, and therefore meeting the requirements of the *Local Government Act 1999*.

The objectives of this Policy are:

- to promote positive relations between the Council and its community;
- to seek and take account of the views, issues and aspirations expressed by the community and other stakeholders as required by the Act;
- to pursue creative, relevant, engaging and cost effective means of seeking and receiving feedback, as well as providing information to the community;
- give due and appropriate consideration to feedback received from consultation in conjunction with implications and outcomes, especially in respect of budget commitments, and other legislative constraints and considerations;
- to recognise that different issues require different forms of consultation as outlined in the *iap2 public participation spectrum*.

2.2 Scope

- 2.2.1 Active participation in consultation opportunities will assist both the community and the Council in creating awareness of issues in future Policy formulation, as well as the numerous administrative and governance decisions required in the operation and management of the Council.
- 2.2.2 Council must prepare and adopt a Public Consultation Policy in accordance with Section 50 of the *Local Government Act 1999*, which sets out the procedure that the Council will follow in cases where the Act requires that a Council must follow its Public Consultation Policy.
- 2.2.3 This Policy will apply to Council Elected Members, staff, contractors, agents and consultants of the Council.

2.3 Strategic Reference

5 Governance and Financial Sustainability

5.1 we are inclusive, engaged and open

5.5 We meet or exceed legislative and accreditation requirements for all relevant programs.

3. PRINCIPLES

3.1 This Policy is underpinned by the following principles, which are believed to be central to effective public consultation. The Council will:

3.1.1 identify potential stakeholders in each specific circumstance;

3.1.2 ensure information is easily understood and accessible to identify stakeholders, and include contact details for obtaining further information in all communication;

3.1.3 clearly define the framework of the consultation process for each specific topic and the level of engagement required;

3.1.4 listen and respond to community views in a balanced way, taking into account all submissions whatsoever;

3.1.5 promote Council decision-making which is open, transparent, responsive and accountable to the community;

3.1.6 keep records and provide feedback about the reasons for decisions, where relevant;

3.1.7 review and evaluate the consultation process to assess if it met aims and goals, what worked well, what could be improved and if resources were well utilised as a basis for continuous improvement.

3.1.8 review and evaluate its Public Consultation and Engagement Policy to ensure ongoing improvement in the way it involves the community and its statutory decision-making process.

3.2 The Act often requires Council to follow its 'public consultation policy' in its decision making process. Listed below are the sections of the Act that provide for public consultation:

3.2.1 representation reviews - composition and wards (Section 12)

3.2.2 status of a council or change of various names (Section 13)

3.2.3 prudential reporting (Section 48)

3.2.4 public consultation policy (Section 50)

3.2.5 strategic management plan (Section 122)

3.2.6 annual budget and business plan (Section 123)

3.2.7 by-laws (Section 249)

3.2.8 order-making policy (Section 259)

3.2.9 opening hours of principal office (Section 45(3))

3.2.10 code of practice - access to meetings and documents (Section 92(5))

3.2.11 basis of rating (Section 151(7))

3.2.12 rating - differential rates (Section 156(14a))

3.2.13 community land - classification (193(2))

3.2.14 revocation of classification of land as community land (Section 194(2))

3.2.15 community land management plans (Section 197(1) and 198(2))

- 3.2.16 alienation of community land by lease or licence (Section 202(2))
- 3.2.17 street names (Section 219)
- 3.2.18 granting of a prescribed authorisation or permit (Section 223) and
- 3.2.19 planting of trees/vegetation (Section 232)
- 3.2.20 removal of vehicles (Section 237)

It should be noted that Items 3.2.1, 3.2.2, 3.2.4, 3.2.6, 3.2.11, 3.2.12 and 3.2.17 above provide specific processes in regard to the public consultation process required with respect to these Sections of the Act.

- 3.3 The following process will be undertaken by the Council to fulfil the requirements of this Policy:
 - 3.3.1 The Council will identify a range of options available to communicate information to a range of interested persons (including the general public) and invite submissions. Gathering information and opinions from the community assists Council in its decision making process.
 - 3.3.2 As a minimum, the Council will publish a notice in the local Transcontinental Newspaper and Council's Website (www.portaugusta.sa.gov.au), describing the matter for which public consultation is required, and inviting interested persons to make written submissions to the Council within a period being at least 21 days from the date of the notice. This period may be extended, as approved by Council, on a case by case basis.
 - 3.3.3 In addition to the above, other options which the Council may choose to utilise to engage, communicate information and invite submissions, include:
 - 3.3.3.1 letter/survey drops to residences, owners and occupiers (where appropriate)
 - 3.3.3.2 telephone access line and/or the Internet/Council Website
 - 3.3.3.3 media releases to radio, television and the print media
 - 3.3.3.4 letters to stakeholders
 - 3.3.3.5 erection of a sign on properties subject to a revocation proposal of the classification of community land
 - 3.3.3.6 public meetings
 - 3.3.3.7 registered email
 - 3.3.3.8 social media platforms
 - 3.3.3.9 email (interest) distribution groups
 - 3.3.3.10 or any other means as determined by the Council.
 - 3.3.4 Any step taken by the Council in addition to the minimum requirement set out above, will be at the absolute discretion of the Council, and dependent upon the particular topic or issue under consideration, the resources available to the Council, and the level of interest the topic or issue is likely to generate.
- 3.5 Statistics in relation to Public Consultation and Engagement will be included in Council's Annual Report.
- 3.6 The Engagement Strategy, developed in line with the IAP2 principles, outlines the areas that must be considered when preparing an Engagement Plan. The Plan must be easy to read and should include a summary on why Council is seeking information and opinions, what the aim of the consultation is, how the community information that is gathered will be used and the community informed of the outcomes.

- 3.7 Any alteration or substitution of this Policy with a new Policy will require public consultation, unless the Council determines that the alteration or substitution is only of minor significance and would attract little or no community interest.

4. RESPONSIBILITY AND REVIEW

4.1 Responsible Officer

The Chief Executive Officer of the Council is responsible for:

- 4.1.1 implementation of this Policy
- 4.1.2 reporting on the Council's success in meeting the objectives of this Policy
- 4.1.3 reporting on the review and evaluation of this Policy.

4.2 Availability

This Policy will be available for inspection at the Council's principal office during ordinary business hours at no charge and is also located on Council's Website. Copies of this Policy may be obtained upon request at a cost to be determined from time to time by the Council.

4.3 Review

This policy will be reviewed within 12 months of a General Election for Local Government, or as required to meet other obligations.

5. REFERENCES

5.1 Legislation

Section 50 Local Government Act 1999

5.2 Other References

Fees and Charges Register
Social Media Policy
Public Consultation Schedule of Requirements and Community Engagement Strategy
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