

Council Policy – Community Engagement

Responsible Directorate	Community Engagement
Responsible Business Unit/s	Communications and Customer Engagement
Responsible Officer	Manager Communications and Customer Engagement
Affected Business Units	All

Objective

The purpose of this Policy is to provide guiding principles for community engagement to ensure consistent, meaningful, and best practice engagement is carried out within the Shire of Serpentine Jarrahdale (the Shire).

Scope

This Policy applies to all Shire staff and contractors that deliver services, or undertake projects, that impact Shire community and stakeholders.

The Shire will engage with community and stakeholders using a number of different methods appropriate to the level of engagement, and in accordance with the Shire's Community Engagement Strategy

Policy

Policy Statement

The Shire of Serpentine Jarrahdale will deliver timely and appropriate community engagement, which keeps people informed, provide meaningful opportunity for input and show when and how participation has contributed to decisions and outcomes.

The Shire's approach to community engagement is built upon the International Association for Public Participation (IAP2) core values and practices, which reflect international standards for best-practice engagement.

Principles

The Shire's approach to all community and stakeholder engagement is guided by the following set of principles.

- **Right to be involved:** Our communities have a right to be involved in decisions which affect them, and we are genuine and responsive in seeking their input for sustainable development when decisions are made.
- **Accessible and inclusive:** We are inclusive and accessible to all stakeholder groups, incorporating all ages, abilities, genders, and cultural backgrounds. We provide a range of engagement activities and techniques to ensure the broadest possible range of stakeholders have the opportunity to participate.
- **Time sensitive:** We respect people's time, ask the questions that matter and provide quality information and sufficient timeframes for people to participate and contribute meaningful input.

- **Tailored:** We use a range of engagement and communication methods to suit the purpose of engagement and the range of stakeholders involved, including subsets of the community that may be difficult to reach.
- **Transparent:** We make decisions in the public interest in an open and transparent way and provide feedback to our stakeholders to explain our decisions and how their input has influenced the outcome.
- **Learning from practice:** We evaluate our engagement, report on, and publish our engagement outcomes and are committed to continuous improvement.

Community Perception Survey

The Community Perception Survey enables Council to keep in touch with the current wishes of local residents, determine priorities and make the best decision possible on behalf of the community in line with the Shire of Serpentine Jarrahdale Council Plan 2023-2033.

The survey shall be conducted every two years, pending budget allocation or as per legislative requirements.

Communication with Residents

The Shire will communicate with residents regarding its intention to undertake a Community Perception Survey. This communication will include information about how residents may be involved in the survey, the dates the surveying will be undertaken and how and when residents can access the Community Perception Survey outcomes report.

The Community Perception Survey outcomes report will be posted to the Shire website once it has been endorsed by Council.

Roles and Responsibilities

Staff undertaking engagement and the relevant Manager/Director have a role and responsibility in planning and implementing community engagement.

The Communications and Customer Engagement Team is available to assist and participate where required.

Further guidance is provided in the Shire's Community Engagement Strategy, while information on delivering community engagement is detailed in the Shire's Toolkit for Community Engagement and Engagement Plan template.

Definitions

Community means people who live, work, or visit the Shire and are united by at least one common characteristic such as geography, shared interests, impacts, values, experiences or traditions.

Community consultation means the practice of actively bringing community and stakeholder values into decisions about the plans, projects, and policies that Council develops on behalf of the community, using a range of methods.

Consultation means seeking and receiving feedback or opinion, usually on a proposed plan or decision, e.g. seeking comment on a draft policy or concept.

Stakeholder means groups, communities and individuals who have an interest in the decisions of Council and are directly impacted by their outcomes but may not necessarily reside or work here.

Related Documents

- Community Engagement Strategy
- Council Plan 2023-2033
- Strategic Community Plan 2017 - 2027 Policies
- Council Policy - Social Media
- Complaints Resolution Policy
- Shire of Serpentine Jarrahdale Code of Conduct for Councillors and Employees
- Toolkit for Community Engagement
- Engagement Plan

Legislation / Local Law Requirements

- *Local Government Act 1995*
- *Planning and Development Act 2005*
- *Land Rights Act 1993*

In addition to Council's commitment to meaningful engagement to ensure the community is informed and engaged in its future, Council has a duty to act in accordance with its legislative obligations, for example when:

- developing a 10 year Strategic Community Plan
- changing local laws (such as laws around dog ownership or parking fees)
- applying different rates according to zoning, land use or vacant land
- determining planning matters including development applications.

The Local Government Act 1995 and the Planning and Development Act 2005 are the two most critical pieces of legislation with regards to community engagement.

In exercising its planning functions, Council is further guided by the direction expressed in the Planning and Development Act 2005, Planning and Development (Local Planning Schemes) Regulations 2015 to "carry out any other consultation the local government considers appropriate".

Council also has legislative responsibility under the Land Rights Act 1993 to engage with Aboriginal stakeholders to protect cultural heritage and the rights of traditional owners to self-determination on their traditional homelands.

Amendment Record

Relevant Delegations			
		Date	Resolution Number
Council Adoption		21 September 2020	OCM308/09/20
Version	Date	Resolution Number	Amendment Details
2	17 March 2025	OCM068/03/25	Incorporate Community Perception Survey