



DATE ADOPTED: 28 APRIL 2020

VERSION: 1.0

POLICY OBJECTIVES

The objectives of this policy are to:

- Establish Council's commitment to the principles of community engagement to inform Council decision making
- Establish a framework for the design, planning and management of community engagement across the organisation
- Embed a philosophy of community engagement as a core part of how Council does business.

POLICY SCOPE

This policy applies to Councillors, the General Manager, staff, volunteers and contractors as it pertains to all community engagement activities undertaken to inform Council decision making.

POLICY STATEMENT

Maitland City Council is committed to ensuring meaningful, informed and genuine community engagement contributes to Council decision making and problem solving. Council will align its engagement with international best practice, most notably the International Association of Public Participation's (IAP2) Core Values. Engagement activities will reflect the social justice principles of access, equity, participation and rights as well as Council's adopted guiding principles.

1. Council's commitment to engagement

Council is committed to proactively engaging our community to inform decision making, where appropriate. We will ensure staff have the training and skills they need to plan, design and manage engagement and provide opportunities to build organisational capacity to embed engagement as a core part of how Council does business.

2. Principles of community engagement

Our community engagement principles are shaped by our Guiding Principles and are our promise to the community about how, when, why and who we will engage.

Council will be guided by the following principles for community engagement:

- Informative and transparent – we actively share information
- Inclusive and accessible – we make it easy for everyone to participate
- Proactive and timely – we engage early in the process

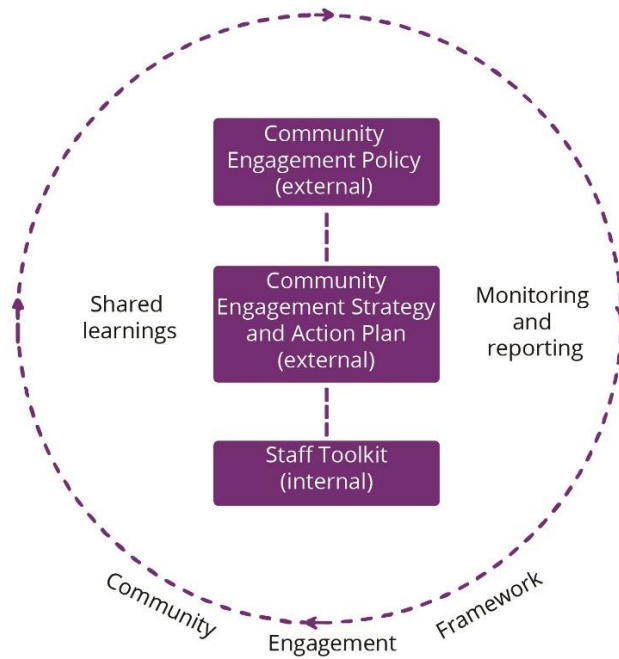


- Meaningful and genuine – we listen and consider your input
- Flexible and responsive – we are open to change
- Reported – we close the loop

3. Community Engagement Framework

The Community Engagement Framework will comprise a Community Engagement Strategy and Action Plan to provide transparency and accountability to the community, and a Staff Toolkit to support staff.

Figure 1: Maitland City Council’s Community Engagement Framework





The framework is based on an adapted model of IAP2 Australasia's Community Engagement Model. The model recognises that community engagement is not a one way path from Council to community. Engagement may be motivated from within the community or even be led by the community itself. Council is committed to this approach and will use the model to identify the most appropriate roles for Council and the community within a project.

Figure 2: Adapted Community Engagement Model for Maitland City Council



IAP2's Public Participation Spectrum will be used by Council to help identify the level of influence and participation that is required based on the purpose of the engagement project. The spectrum also sets out Council's approach to the community at each level to ensure transparency about what the community can influence and what it cannot, from Inform to Consult, Involve and Collaborate. To view the spectrum, refer to Council's Community Engagement Strategy and Action Plan.



POLICY DEFINITIONS

- Community:** Anyone affected by or interested in a decision of Maitland City Council. It includes individuals and groups of people, stakeholders, interest groups and community groups.
- Engagement:** A planned process with the specific purpose of working with organisations, stakeholders and our community to solve problems and/or shape decisions in relation to a problem, opportunity or outcome. It is also known as community consultation, stakeholder engagement and public participation.
- Stakeholder:** A stakeholder is an individual, a group of individuals, organisation/s or political entity with a specific stake in the outcome of a decision.



POLICY ADMINISTRATION

BUSINESS GROUP:	Vibrant City
RESPONSIBLE OFFICER:	Manager Marketing and Communications
COUNCIL REFERENCE:	Ordinary Council Meeting – 28 April 2020 – Item 11.1
POLICY REVIEW DATE:	Three (3) years from date of adoption
FILE NUMBER:	34/74
RELEVANT LEGISLATION	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Local Government Act 1993 (NSW)</i> • <i>Local Government (General) Regulation 2005 (NSW)</i> • <i>Environmental Planning and Assessment Act 1979 (NSW)</i> • <i>Government Information (Public Access) Act 2009</i> • <i>Privacy Act 1988</i> • <i>Privacy and Personal Information Act 1998 (NSW)</i> • <i>State Records Act 1998 (NSW)</i>
RELATED POLICIES / PROCEDURES / PROTOCOLS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Code of Conduct • Draft Community Engagement Strategy • Draft Community Engagement Guide and Toolkit • Social Media Policy and Guide • Public Exhibition Protocol • Community Participation Plan

POLICY HISTORY

VERSION	DATE APPROVED	DESCRIPTION OF CHANGES
1.0	28 April 2020	New policy adopted