Community Engagement Strategy

2017 - 2020

city of
MANDURAH

Community Engagement Strategy

The City of Mandurah (the City) is committed to further embedding a culture of community engagement and participation in our decision-making process. The work the City does impacts the community it serves; therefore it is essential that they participate. Engagement is more than just telling our community and stakeholders what is being done; it is giving them the opportunity to make a contribution to the decision-making process. This gives the City the knowledge that as an organisation we are delivering the best possible outcomes for all concerned.

The purpose of this strategy is to provide a framework for community engagement. An Engagement Planning Guide has been developed to assist staff in implementing Community Engagement to ensure consistency across the organisation, and staff are to follow this guide when undertaking engagement projects.

Engagement encourages and supports community participation in local government decision-making. All community engagement is to be undertaken in accordance with the principles of this framework.

The Community Engagement Strategy identifies strategies and timeframes for engagement according to the nature of the topic being considered. The Community Engagement Framework (Attachment A) has been informed by the International Association for Public Participation (IAP2) Public Participation Spectrum, and outlines the types of engagement that might be used and which of these are most appropriate, given the level of impact either across the City or locally.

Benefits of Community Engagement

Community engagement enables the City to inform, consult, involve, collaborate or empower stakeholders, in accordance with the methods outlined within the International Association for Public Participation (IAP2) spectrum.

Engagement provides the City with the opportunity to:

- Listen to stakeholders;
- Consider a range of options and develop ideas together with the stakeholders; and
- Build a shared understanding on the approach taken on different projects and services.

Engagement ensures that:

- Stakeholders are aware of, and/or participate at the appropriate level in, the development and review of policies, plans and services;
- Stakeholder satisfaction with the City's policies, plans and services is acknowledged and considered, and feedback is provided on the results of their input; and
- Council is open and accountable in its decision making, resource management and expenditure.

What are the City's principles for engagement?

The principles of community engagement are based on our values of courage, innovation, excellence, integrity and connected.

These values are demonstrated when the engagement practice:

- involves honest and straightforward dealing with our community
- provides accurate, timely and easily understood information to our community
- includes an awareness and understanding by staff of how Council actions impact on our community
- includes a clear explanation of the decisions and actions of Council at all stages of the process
- develops out of a strong customer focus and a respect for the community that Council serves
- makes community the focus
- acknowledges the community's right to be advocates for what they want or need
- listening, responding and providing feedback to stakeholders about how the information gathered through the engagement process was used to inform the decision or outcome
- respects individual and cultural differences at all times.

When will the City of Mandurah engage the community?

Community engagement will take place:

- where community input can improve a project or enhance decision making
- to help identify community needs
- in response to expressions of community interest
- when Council resolves to consult the community
- when required by law or by agreement with a government agency or statutory body

Engagement principles and the development application process

Consultations with regard to development applications are governed by State Government and City of Mandurah planning and legislative provisions. With regard to major developments with significant community interest only city led projects will follow the community consultation Framework. The City will encourage other projects led by landowners or State/Federal government to follow the principles, however it may be that the City can only inform projects led by others.

Community Engagement Planning Guide

Effective consultations are:

- timely
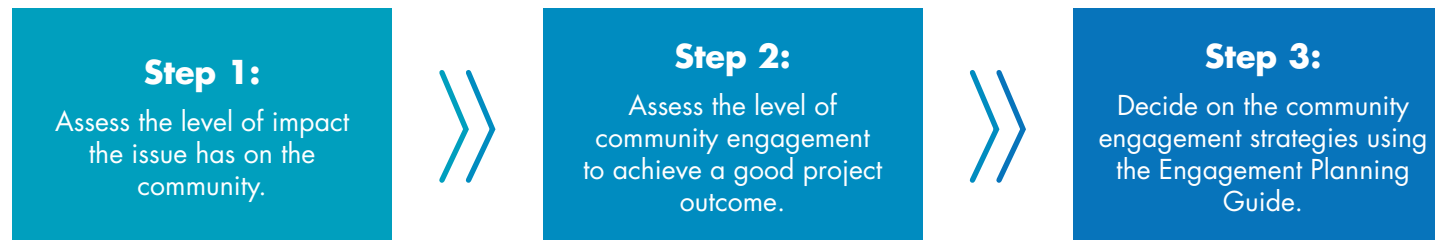- user friendly
- flexible
- responsive to community needs.

Decisions on how best to consult our community on a particular issue will be based on City of Mandurah Community Engagement Principles and Community Engagement Planning Guide.

Engagement Planning Guide

An **Engagement Planning Guide** has been developed to assist staff in implementing the City's Community Engagement Principles. It is a dynamic document that will evolve over time taking into account community and organisational needs, emerging technologies and developing best practice. The **Engagement Planning Guide** includes analytical tools for the use of staff in developing appropriate strategies for particular consultations. The framework in the Planning Guide has been adapted from the model developed by the **International Association for Public Participation (IAP2)**.

Developing engagement plans and strategies

There are three steps for City staff to follow in engagement planning:

Step 1: Assess the level of impact the issue has on the community.	»	**Step 2:** Assess the level of community engagement to achieve a good project outcome.	»	**Step 3:** Decide on the community engagement strategies using the Engagement Planning Guide.

Impacts of a proposal on a community can be potential, real or perceived impacts. The impacts can be beneficial or negative. Impacts may also be different for different groups and individuals in a community. Some proposals require more community input than others. There may be resource and time constraints on the City of Mandurah Council's engagement activities. It is critical to develop a balanced approach between the demands for community consultation, resources available, significance of an issue for the community and level of influence the community has on a decision.

Understanding by the City of Mandurah staff of the level and / or extent of the impact of a proposal can develop during the pre-engagement and engagement processes, and these cases may require a reconsideration and possible adjustment of the strategies.

STEP 1: Assessing the level of impact

Using the following matrix, the impact of a proposal on the community can be determined as one of the following:

- City wide higher level impact
- Local higher level impact
- City wide lower level impact
- Local lower level impact

	City Wide Impact	Local Impact
Higher Level Impact	The proposal project will have a real or perceived impact across whole City or on a number of different parts of the City or on a number of different population groups across the City. It has the potential for one or more of the following: • Creating community controversy and /or conflict • High level of community interest • Impacting on WA regional or State strategies or directions Examples: • City of Mandurah 20 Year Community Plan • Mandurah Bridge Redevelopment • City wide ODP's • City wide strategies and plans eg parking, heritage, recreation • Any tree removals or environmental change that is highly visible • Legal requirements • Change to service standards • Changes to current major community focus activities	The proposal project will have a real or perceived impact on a particular locality or suburb or on a number of different parts of the City or on a particular population group. It has the potential to create community controversy at a local level and / or there is existing or potential high level of local community or sectional interest. Examples: • City Centre plans • City Centre upgrades • Masterplans for major parks and sporting fields • Addition or loss of a local service or facility • Upgrades to major parks or open space • Development of capital works proposals for local projects, eg: Lakelands development • Any tree removals or environmental change required as part of development • Taverns/light entertainment • Artwork • Amendments to masterplans
Lower Level Impact	Recurrent large scale programs and activities which impact across the city but which have a low potential for dispute or require relatively minor behaviour changes by residents. Low risk of controversy or conflict. Examples: • Capital works program overall • Changes of location or hours of operation of a City wide service • Road sealing/footpath upgrade programs	Small change or improvement to service or facility at a local level. Low risk of controversy or conflict. Examples: • Naming of local facility • Local events/celebrations • Upgrades to neighbourhood parks and playgrounds • Local street upgrade • Specific events for local groups or special groups. • Local minor traffic proposals

STEP 2: Assessing the level of community participation

Having determined the level of impact, the next step is to determine the level of participation required to obtain the best outcome for the project. The best outcome includes community satisfaction with the scope and execution of the project and an understanding that community views have been considered in the outcome. The level of engagement is related to, but not dependent on, the level of impact and will be determined as one of the following:

Inform   **Involve**   **Empower**

Consult   **Collaborate**

The International Association for Public Participation (IAP2) identifies and defines various levels of community engagement and that terminology has been adapted for use as follows:

Inform One way communication providing balanced and objective information to assist understanding about something that is going to happen or has happened.

Consult Two way communications designed to obtain public feedback about ideas on rationale, alternatives and proposals to inform decision making.

Involve Participatory process designed to help identify issues and views to ensure that concerns and aspirations are understood and considered prior to decision making.

Collaborate Working together to develop understanding of all issues and interests to work out alternatives and identify preferred solutions.

Empower To place the final decision making in the hands of the public.

It is to be noted that the IAP2 Spectrum continues to also include "empower" as a level of community engagement, whereby final decision making is in the hands of the public, however under the Local Government Act Elected Members would have to agree to empower the community to make the decision and approve the recommendations.

STEP 2: Assessing the level of community participation

Inform	Consult	Involve	Collaborate	Empower
Public Participation Goal: To provide balanced and objective information to assist understanding of topic, alternatives, opportunities and/or solutions.	**Public Participation Goal:** To obtain public feedback on analysis, alternatives and/or decisions.	**Public Participation Goal:** To work with the public throughout the process to ensure that concerns and aspirations are consistently understood and considered.	**Public Participation Goal:** To partner with the public in each aspect of the decision including development of alternatives and identification of preferred solution.	**Public Participation Goal:** To place final decision making in the hands of the public.
Promise to the Public: We will keep you informed.	**Promise to the Public:** We will keep you informed, listen to and acknowledge concerns and aspirations, and provide feedback on how input influenced the decision.	**Promise to the Public:** We will work with you to ensure that your concerns and aspirations are directly reflected in the alternatives developed and provide feedback on how input influenced the decision.	**Promise to the Public:** We will look to you for direct advice and innovation in formulating solutions and incorporate your advice and recommendations into the decisions to the maximum extent possible.	**Promise to the Public:** We will implement what you decide.
Example techniques: • Fact sheets • Web sites • Open days	**Example techniques:** • Public comment • Focus groups • Surveys	**Example techniques:** • Workshop • Deliberate polling	**Example techniques:** • Citizen Advisory Committees • Consensus building • Participatory decision-making	**Example techniques:** • Citizen juries • Ballots • Delegated decisions

STEP 3: Deciding on a community engagement plan

City of Mandurah staff developing community engagement strategies and plans need an awareness of the nature of the potential or perceived impact of the project or program on residents, businesses, and visitors, as well as the needs of the community and/or specific groups/areas affected by proposals. This awareness will inform the development of the type, intensity and timing of engagement activities.

This awareness may be the result of experience with previous projects, including previous consultations, or by developing pre-engagement processes. Pre-engagements are to be scaled to the project and may range from a few phone calls to a key community members or past participants to more elaborate means such as focus groups, open houses, interviews and meetings.

The City of Mandurah Planning Guide includes an Engagement Matrix to assist in the selecting appropriate strategies and developing engagement plans. As the levels in the Matrix are a hierarchy with cumulative actions, each level assumes the use of tools and actions from the preceding levels. Different levels of engagement may also be required at different stages of a project. For example when a project has been developed through the "involving" level of engagement, there may be the need to engage at the "informing" level at later stages. Legislative and policy requirements and constraints and particular projects may have engagement requirements or guidelines outside the Community Engagement Planning Guide.

These can include:

- Legal requirements set out in legislation such as the Local Government Act, Health Act, Planning and Development Act
- Funding or partnership agreements with the Federal or State Government or their agencies, or with other local government bodies or independent bodies
- Decisions on Council policies
- Implementation of Council's regulatory activities
- Situations where there may be significant privacy issues
- In cases where these legislative or other requirements or constraints have established the minimum consultation requirements, the project may be reviewed using The City of Mandurah Principles and Engagement Planning Guide to provide best practice.

Community Engagement Plans

Engagement plans are action documents that guide staff in undertaking and reporting on community consultations. They set out strategies with timelines and activities aligned to the project timelines. An Engagement Matrix has been developed to assist in the selecting appropriate strategies in order to develop these plans. The Engagement Matrix is also a dynamic document that will evolve over time taking into account community and organisational needs, emerging technologies and developing best practice.

Plans including pre-engagement plans can be developed using the format in the engagement plan template. City of Mandurah Staff are encouraged to seek the involvement of the Communications team early in the process of preparing engagement plans. The plans will be audited for compliance with the Community Engagement Principles and Framework.

For major initiatives, it is appropriate to seek the endorsement of the consultation.

How will these principles be implemented?

1. Education and training of staff to understand the principles and framework – which will include IAP2 training for all managers and staff who undertake community engagement

2. Roll out of framework and toolkit to staff who undertake community engagement

3. Toolkit to include online decision matrix

4. Establishing a register of all community engagement activity/projects

5. Ensuring all Council reports include the level and type of community engagement that is to be/was undertaken if appropriate

6. The effectiveness of the community engagement strategy will be evaluated on an ongoing basis including:

   a. Satisfaction with how the community is consulted on local issues (Biannual Community Satisfaction Survey)

   b. Satisfaction with how the community is informed about local issues (Biannual Community Satisfaction Survey)

   c. The number of times the Council requests further community engagement to be undertaken

   d. The level of engagement each project/activity when community engagement is undertaken

   e. 2 years review of the strategy itself.

Appendix 1

IAP2's PUBLIC PARTICIPATION SPECTRUM

iap2 — international association for public participation

The IAP2 Federation has developed the Spectrum to help groups define the public's role in any public participation process.
The IAP2 Spectrum is quickly becoming an international standard.

INCREASING IMPACT ON THE DECISION →

	INFORM	CONSULT	INVOLVE	COLLABORATE	EMPOWER
PUBLIC PARTICIPATION GOAL	To provide the public with balanced and objective information to assist them inunderstanding the problem, alternatives, opportunities and/or solutions.	To obtain public feedback on analysis, alternatives and/or decisions.	To work directly with the public throughout the process to ensure that public concerns and aspirations are consistently understood and considered.	To partner with the public in each aspect of the decision including the development of alternatives and identification of the preferred solution.	To place final decision making in the hands of the public.
PROMISE TO THE PUBLIC	We will keep you informed.	We will keep you informed, listen to and acknowledge concerns and aspirations, and provide feedback on how public input influenced the decision. We will seek your feedback on drafts and proposals.	We will work with you to ensure that your concerns and aspirations are directly reflected in the alternatives developed and provide feedback on how public input influenced the decision.	We will work together with you to formulate solutions and incorporate your advice and recommendations into the decisions to the maximum extent possible.	We will implement what you decide.

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Stops for community engagement

1. DEFINE — What is the decision to be made?
2. IDENTIFY — Who needs to be engaged?
3. UNDERSTAND — Who are you going to engage?
4. DOCUMENT — How are you going to record and report the public participation?
5. IMPLEMENT — Engage
6. LEARN — What has the community engagement told you?
7. INFLUENCE — What affect/change has occurred as a result of the public participation?

NOTE: Courtesy of City of Bendigo

1. Define
What is the decision to be made?
- Can you describe the decision to be made in one sentence? (for many projects there may be several decisions to be made at different stages of the project)
- Do you need to take into account any relevant legislation?
- Can you clearly describe the objectives and purpose of the community engagement?

2. Identify
Who needs to be engaged?
- Who is or will be affected by, interested in, or who can influence or inform the decision?
- Do you understand how they are affected and the nature and intensity of their interest, their capacity and willingness to participate and what are any barriers to that participation?

3. Understand
How you are going to engage?
- What level of participation is required? (Inform, Consult, Involve, Collaborate or Empower)
- What resources are required to undertake the engagement and how long will the public participation take?
- Define how their input will be used.
- Have/how will the objectives and scope of the community engagement been/be made clear to the participants?

4. Document
How are you going to record and report the public participation?
- Plan, prepare and ensure engagement activities align with Council Policies
- Ensure that the participants understand their role and the engagement is recorded and reported back to the community
- Are there any risks that need to be managed?
- Need to constantly monitor, provide feedback and evaluate the process

5. Implement
Engage
- You have developed an action plan that has the objective(s), identified stakeholders and the best way to engage them as well as the technique, now out all your work into action

6. Learn
What has the community engagement told you?
- Monitor progress, budget and timelines to meet objectives
- Monitor and respond to risks

7. Influence
What affect/change has occurred as a result of the public participation?
- How has the engagement informed the decision that needed to be made?
- Close the loop (what was asked, what we were told and what we did)
- Report to Council on the community engagement outcomes

Engagement Decision Matrix

Informing

Type of Consultation	City Wide High Impact	Local High Impact	City Wide Low Impact	Local Low Impact
Telephone contact	Consider	Consider	Consider	Consider
In person meeting	Consider	Consider	Consider	Consider
Response to correspondence	Essential	Essential	Essential	Essential
Pamphlet	Consider	Consider	Consider	Consider
Letter box drop	Consider	Essential	Consider	Consider
Mayors Radio	Essential	Consider	Consider	Consider
Notice in local papers	Essential	Essential	Essential	Consider
Media release	Essential	Essential	Consider	Consider
Social media	Essential	Essential	Consider	Consider
Special Website (Have your say Mandurah)	Essential	Essential	Essential	Consider
Site display	Consider	Consider	Consider	Consider
Displays in other locations	Consider	Consider	Consider	Consider
Web information	Essential	Essential	Essential	Essential
Information to local resident committees	Essential	Essential	Essential	Essential

Informing and Consulting

Type of Consultation	City Wide High Impact	Local High Impact	City Wide Low Impact	Local Low Impact
Telephone contact	Consider	Consider	Consider	Consider
In person meeting	Consider	Consider	Consider	Consider
Response to correspondence	Essential	Essential	Essential	Essential
Pamphlet	Consider	Consider	Consider	Cansider
Letter box drop	Consider	Essential	Consider	Consider
Mayors Radio	Essential	Consider	Consider	Mansider
Notice in– local papers	Essential	Essential	Essential	Consider
Media release	Essential	Essential	Consider	Consider
Social media	Essential	Essential	Essential	Essential
Special Website (Have your say Mandurah)	Essential	Essential	Essential	Essential
Site display	Consider	Consider	Consider	Consider
Displays in other locations	Consider	Consider	Consider	Consider
Web information	Essential	Essential	Essential	Essential
Chat Chair Cafe Chat	Essential	Essential	Consider	Consider

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Engagement Decision Matrix

Informing and Consulting

Type of Consultation	City Wide High Impact	Local High Impact	City Wide Low Impact	Local Low Impact
Information to local resident committees	Essential	Essential	Essential	Essential
Suggestion box	Consider	Consider	Consider	Consider
Telephone survey	Consider	Consider	Consider	Consider
Written survey	Consider	Consider	Consider	Consider
Hotline/phone in	Consider	Consider	Consider	Consider
Letter to key stakeholder and resident groups inviting submissions	Essential	Essential	Consider	Consider
Develop database of those making submissions	Essential	Essential	Essential	Essential
Media release inviting submission	Essential	Essential	Consider	Consider
Interview with key individuals	Consider	Consider	Consider	Consider
Public exhibition	Essential	Consider	Consider	Consider

Type of Consultation	City Wide High Impact	Local High Impact	City Wide Low Impact	Local Low Impact
Focus Group Session	Consider	Consider	Consider	Consider
Briefing of relevant local residents meetings	Consider	Essential	Consider	Consider
Residents' panel	Consider	Consider	Consider	Consider
Joint Venture	Consider	Consider	Consider	Consider
Series of Workshops	Consider	Consider	Consider	Consider

Engagement Decision Matrix

Informing, Consulting, Collaborating

Type of Consultation	City Wide High Impact	Local High Impact	City Wide Low Impact	Local Low Impact
Telephone contact	Consider	Consider	Consider	Consider
In person meeting	Consider	Consider	Consider	Consider
Response to correspondence	Essential	Essential	Essential	Essential
Pamphlet	Consider	Consider	Consider	Consider
Letter box drop	Consider	Essential	Consider	Consider
Mayors Radio	Essential	Consider	Consider	Consider
Notice in– local papers	Essential	Essential	Essential	Consider
Media release	Essential	Essential	Consider	Consider
Social media	Essential	Essential	Essential	Essential
Special Website (Have your say Mandurah)	Essential	Essential	Essential	Essential
Site display	Consider	Consider	Consider	Consider
Displays in other locations	Consider	Consider	Consider	Consider
Web information	Essential	Essential	Essential	Essential
Chat Chair Cafe Chat	Essential	Essential	Consider	Consider

Type of Consultation	City Wide High Impact	Local High Impact	City Wide Low Impact	Local Low Impact
Information to local residents committees	Essential	Essential	Essential	Essential
Suggestion box	Consider	Consider	Consider	Consider
Telephone survey	Consider	Consider	Consider	Consider
Written survey	Consider	Consider	Consider	Consider
Hotline/phone in	Consider	Consider	Consider	Consider
Letter to key stakeholder and resident groups inviting submissions	Essential	Consider	Consider	Consider
Develop database of those making submissions	Essential	Essential	Essential	Essential
Media release inviting submission	Essential	Essential	Consider	Consider
Interview with key individuals	Consider	Consider	Consider	Consider
Public exhibition	Essential	Consider	Consider	Consider

Engagement Decision Matrix

Informing, Consulting, Collaborating

Type of Consultation	City Wide High Impact	Local High Impact	City Wide Low Impact	Local Low Impact
Focus Group Session	Consider	Consider	Consider	Consider
Briefing of relevant precinct meetings	Consider	Essential	Consider	Consider
Briefing of Precinct Coordination Committee	Essential	Consider	Consider	Consider
Residents' panel	Consider	Consider	Consider	Consider
Meeting with stakeholders groups/ user groups	Essential	Essential	Consider	Consider
Dedicated project email address	Consider	Consider	Consider	Consider
Workshop session	Consider	Consider	Consider	Consider
Conmmunity Forum	Consider	Consider	Consider	Consider
Public Art Session	Consider	Consider	Consider	Consider

Type of Consultation	City Wide High Impact	Local High Impact	City Wide Low Impact	Local Low Impact
Meeting by Invitation	Consider	Consider	Consider	Consider
Site Tour Meeting Public Meeting	Consider	Consider	Consider	Consider
Adviosry Committee	Consider	Consider	Consider	Consider
Committee of Management	Consider	Consider	Consider	Consider
Taskforce or working party	Consider	Consider	Consider	Consider
Joint Venture	Consider	Consider	Consider	Consider
Series of Workshops	Consider	Consider	Consider	Consider

Table 1: Engagement Techniques for INFORM

Consider techniques for INFORM level	Always think it through	What can go right	What can go wrong
Printed Materials Fact sheets Newsletter Media advertising – local papers Brochures Issue papers Letters Media releases Media conference	• Keep it short and simple • Make it visually interesting and engaging but not too busy or slick • Proof-read all documents • Ask randomly selected staff members to trial material and provide feedback before distribution to the public • Use language that is inclusive and jargon free • Always include opportunities for comment and include reply paid forms or envelopes to encourage two-way communication • Explain public role and how comments have affected project decisions • Offer interpretation services	• Can reach a large target audience • Public look for information in regular format eg. newsletter, media column • Allows for technical and legal reviews • Written comments returned in reply paid format • Documentation of public involvement facilitated • Mailing list development	• Distribution planning inadequate • Materials do not reach the mark • Materials not read • Limited capacity to communicate complicated concepts • Information misinterpreted
Displays Council Offices Libraries Community centres, Shopping centre Schools Childcare centres	• Establish regular sites if possible to build on community culture • Develop a distribution list • Make sure personnel at locations know what materials are about & where they are located & who to contact for further information • Consider electronic displays, eg. Touch screens, TV video loop presentations • Make sure materials are removed when past their use by date	• Information is accessible to the public at relatively little cost • Public use the distribution locations to look for materials • Public visit Council facilities and may learn more about service provision • Public ask for further information at Council distribution sites	• Distribution sites are overcrowded with information and the materials get lost among the collection of materials • There is no active promotion of the materials • Upkeep of information at sites is not well managed
Website Information directly into the household	• Needs to be visible and easy to navigate • Keep information updated	• Capable of reaching a large audience at low cost • Popular information resource	• People without access disadvantaged • Technical difficulties • Hard to navigate

Table 2: Engagement Techniques for CONSULT

Consider techniques for CONSULT level	Always think it through	What can go right	What can go wrong
Printed Materials, Displays, Website	Refer to Table 1	Refer to Table 1	Refer to Table 1
Briefings Council staff Elected Members Technicians Consultants Key stakeholders Community groups (including marginalised groups)	• Keep it short and simple • Use clear, jargon free, inclusive language • Use easy to read diagrams and visuals that are consistent with the verbal and written content	• Control of information/ presentation • Opportunities to clarify misinformation • Reach a wider variety of people • Build community capacity • Evaluate & readjust approach	• Some groups may be left out of briefings • Inaccurate information may be passed on to community • Expectations may be raised • Information may be used inappropriately
Mailed Surveys/ Questionnaires/Response Sheets Blanket distribution Random distribution Selected distribution	• Surveys/Questionnaires should be developed using specific guidelines and trialled before distribution • Collection and method of analysis to be considered and clarified • Level of engagement and parameters need to be clear	• Can gather information from people other than those with special interest • Gather information from people who might not attend meetings • Can gather specific information • Statistically tested results have more credibility	• Response rate can be poor • Communities over surveyed • Can be labour intensive • Questions may be misinterpreted • Results not trusted • Results not fed back to communities effectively
Technical Assistance Attendance at: Briefings Meetings Workshops	• Technical resource persons must be perceived as credible by communities • Ensure technical resource persons have access to information about the communities attitudes	• Build credibility & address public concerns about equity • Facts in dispute can be debated and consensus reached	• Resource availability may be limited • Technicians may not be prepared for working too closely with communities and may lack empathy with community concerns
Open House/Chat Chair Communities engage at their own pace in a comfortable environment Drop in to individually to view plans, ask questions, give opinions, have an informal chat and a coffee, tea etc.	• Be there when you say you are going to be • Consider the demographics of the area and time sessions accordingly • Greet people at the door and explain the format, provide comments sheet • Give people a task eg. "good/bad" dots to place on the displays to record their preferences	• Facilitates a wide variety of people • Break down perceived barriers • Fosters communication • More convenient for people • Engages people more effectively • Minimise aggressive approach to Council staff	• Resource availability may be limited • Technicians may not be prepared for working too closely with communities and may lack empathy with community concerns
Feedback Register Resident pool for feedback	• Check the register content is relative to your purpose	• Gather input from a broad range of people	• Register maintenance can be resource intensive

Table 3: Engagement Techniques for INVOLVE

Consider techniques for INVOLVE level	Always think it through	What can go right	What can go wrong
Printed Materials, Displays, Website, Briefings, Information Contact, Technical Assistance, Open House	Refer to Tables 1 and 2	Refer to Tables 1 and 2	Refer to Tables 1 and 2
Focus Groups Use to test message with randomly selected people or to gain input to assist planning for engagement	• Clear tasks • Relevant representation • Skilled facilitation	• Provides opportunity to test material • Verify prior assumptions • Raise unexpected additional benefits	• Participants may feel restricted by the approach • May be perceived as exclusive • May be costly
Interviews Face to Face Telephone	• Be clear and open about the intent • Consider questions carefully to gather relevant information • Ensure effective information recording methods • Be inclusive • Be equitable	• Gather clear understanding of public concerns and issues • Individuals feel inclined to provide input based on personalised format • Able to reach more people by varying timeframe for interviews	• Can be very time consuming • Participants can take their issues out on the interviewer • Participants are tired of being interviewed on a range of issues and will not engage willingly
Workshops Commence with presentation and allow for interaction in small groups with feedback to larger group to bring all the information together at the end of the workshop	• Know how you plan to use public input before the workshop • How you are going to manage the group – rules for engagement • Use trained facilitators and give them clear instructions to ensure the aims of the workshop are achieved • How are you going to feed- back outcomes of workshop to participants	• Participants can use the opportunity to raise their concerns, needs, issues • Foster equity and credibility • Opportunity to hear the "silent" voices • Special interest groups get to listen to other voices • Unexpected additional benefits • Relational benefits	• Small numbers of participants • Resistance to breaking up into small groups by some participants • Special Interest groups monopolise the workshop • Participants alter the agenda • Facilitators not impartial or not skilled enough to deal with some behaviours • Information session format used rather than workshop format • Feedback not recorded effectively
Field Trips Tour of project site or comparable site for stakeholders, elected members, community groups, media	• Set up booking system to manage demand effectively • Make accessible to diverse groups • Provide itinerary/tour guide • Plan question/answer session • Plan refreshment break/provide water during trip • Consider safety	• Opportunity to develop rapport with stakeholders • Increase knowledge of issues and process for all involved • Unexpected additional benefits	• Number of participants can be limited by resource availability • Intention can be misinterpreted • Project site may reveal unintended conditions • Aggrieved participant may take the opportunity to monopolise captured audience

Table 4: Engagement Techniques for COLLABORATE

Consider techniques for COLLABORATE level	Always think it through	What can go right	What can go wrong
Council Advisory Committees with specific focus	• Chairperson needs to be engaging, clear and inclusive • There needs to be formal mechanism for Advisory Groups to feed directly into Council's decision making process, otherwise it may be tokenistic • The Terms of Reference and focus of Advisory Group need to be clearly defined • Tasks/actions need to be outlined and carried out	• Potential for larger number of representatives on specific issues and increases 'representativeness' • Developing skills of larger number of people • Detailed input can be gained	• Can be costly - providing necessary assistance to these groups so they can overcome any barriers to participation (e.g. may include need for interpreters, childcare, assistance for disabled, staff time for administration and support) • Participants may misunderstand their role as advisors, not decision makers.
Community representatives on Council committees	• Input is ongoing - this aids planning and other developmental processes • Representatives, if they are not Elected Members, are seen by community and Council as 'independent' Establishing Council Committees such as 'Other Special Committees' are referred to in Section 88 of the Local Government Act (1989) • Requires timely administration and individual liaison in particular the provision of minutes and reports to assist decision making	• Demonstrates Council's commitment to citizen participation in decision making • If combined with support, can develop skills of representative so they can develop skills of people in their own community • Opportunities to develop multi-sector partnerships • e.g. public, private, Non Government and community partnerships and bring together different resources, skills and energies to respond to priority issues in the community	• There is a limit to number of community representatives who can be on a committee, so they are not able to represent everyone • Costly to develop skills of representatives • Can be costly to provide necessary administration and assistance to overcome barriers to participation such as interpreters, bilingual workers, assistance for sensory disabled, childcare etc

Table 5: Engagement Techniques for EMPOWER

Consider techniques for EMPOWER level	Always think it through	What can go right	What can go wrong
Mediation/Negotiation/ Dialogue Designed to create shared meanings through effective listening and reflective questioning	• Establish firm guidelines • Ensure the role of the mediator/negotiator and participants are clear • Seek commitment to the process	• Helps participants towards an understanding of others viewpoint • Forward thinking approach sets new directions • Win/Win outcomes • Promotes accountability on both sides	• Can be difficult to identify who the parties are and who and what they represent • Time and resource intensive • Knowledge and skill base required to facilitate mediation/negotiation not acknowledged
Citizen Juries Group of citizens selected to learn about an issue and then examine the data by questioning decision-makers, technicians, and interested parties – all of who are witnesses to the process. The Jury makes recommendations based on their evaluation of the discussions	• Ensure the sessions are managed by a skilled facilitator • Be clear about how the results will be used • Ensure a cross-section from the community • Consider current levels of expertise of participants	• Great opportunity to develop deep understanding of an issue • Positions of interest can shift • Limitations and possibilities can be identified • Can dispel misinformation • Can build credibility • Can provide unexpected benefits	• Group selection can be mistrusted • Participants may not show up on the day • Sessions can loose focus • Cost can be extensive
Design Workshops Sessions where participants become involved in the design of a projects features	• Plan how the design sessions will take place • Provide clear information and guidelines for participants • Provide clear parameters • Provide technical support • Provide opportunities to foster creative ideas	• Can create effective partnerships and working relationships with communities and individuals • Can develop sense of trust for all concerned • Can identify issues and concerns in early stages of projects • Can result in improved outcomes	• Participants can be exposed to views and arguments from different backgrounds • Special interest lobbying can be diffused • Can develop capacity in communities • Can provide unexpected benefits
Deliberative Polling Selecting people from communities to measure informed opinions. Essential elements required to ensure a democratic deliberative process are, influence, inclusion and deliberation (Carson, Hartz-Karp, 2005)	• Ensure a skilled facilitator is used • Commit to full process • Consider resources required and check against budget and hidden costs • Aim for a cross-section of participants from communities • Plan to develop capacity in communities	• Participants can be exposed to views and arguments from different backgrounds • Special interest lobbying can be diffused • Can develop capacity in communities • Can provide unexpected benefits	• Mistrust of the organisers and unfamiliar process can hamper participation • People do not have the time required to commit to the process • Timeframes are unrealistic • Agenda too ambitious or not specific enough

One of the most important roles of an Elected Member is to participate in making policy and decisions on behalf of their community.

Community expectations about decision-making processes have changed over time. The days of citizens electing representatives and leaving them to make decisions on their behalf during their term of office without being engaged in the process are long gone.

Increasingly, citizens expect to have some control over matters that affect their living environment, and to see governments actively telling them about what plans they have, and listening and responding to concerns about matters which impact on the social, economic or environmental wellbeing of their local community.

Facilitating informed decision-making

Some issues to consider regarding Elected Member roles in the community engagement process during Consult, Involve and Collaborate:

- It is prudent that Elected Members not take an active "hands on" role in the community engagement process, but rather maintain a neutral position and be clearly seen as listening to what their community has to say.

- However, in circumstances where an Elected Member has stated a position, it may be appropriate for a statement to be openly made that this is the case. This leaves it in the hands of the community to have input into swaying the strength of, or conviction to maintaining that stated position. In these cases, the argument for Elected Members not having a hands on role during the community engagement process is strengthened, to avoid community perception of a biased process.

It is important to maintain the integrity of an objective and unbiased community engagement process. Whilst it is difficult to make hard and fast rules about how to achieve this, some useful tips follow.
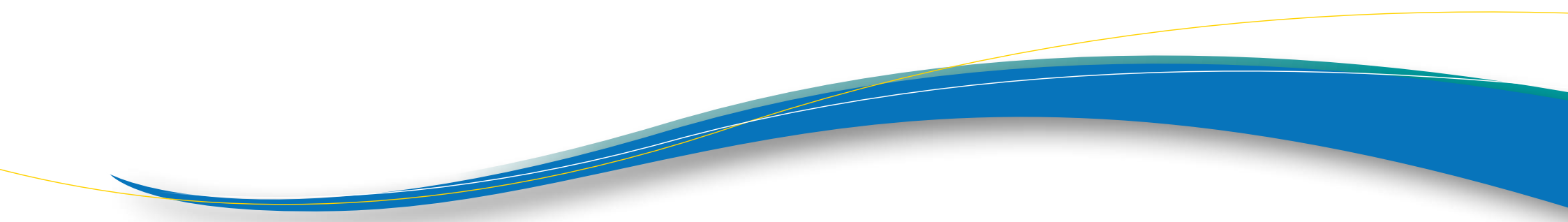
- During the community engagement planning phase, consider nominating suitably experienced staff, engaging specialist consultants, or inviting prominent citizens or community leaders to chair sessions or to facilitate workshops with key stakeholder groups to identify the main issues and gauge their engagement expectations.

- On occasion it may be acceptable for Elected Members to have more prominent roles in community engagement processes. Care needs to be taken however, that they maintain the integrity of an objective and unbiased community engagement process as previously discussed.

- The presence of Elected Members during the information gathering phases, for example at community forums, demonstrates an interest in hearing what the community has to say, but they must clearly be seen as listening. Where they have particular information or facts to contribute, care should be taken by Elected Members to provide information in an objective and non-defensive way.

Elected Members ultimately need to consider the outcome of any community engagement process within the context of strategic planning directions for the whole Council area, resource and budgetary constraints, and broader regional or State policies where relevant.

Having made a final decision, community confidence will be enhanced by providing feedback to those who participated about how their input was taken into account in the decision making process. Elected Members have an important role in this regard, for example, the Mayor may convey messages verbally, in writing or through various mediums, which adds strength to the message that "we have listened and taken your views into account in our decision making".