

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT POLICY



Responsible Division	Finance and Corporate Services
Responsible Business Unit/s	
Responsible Officer	
Affected Business Unit/s	

PURPOSE:

This Community Engagement Policy outlines the City of Bayswater's commitment to engaging with the community through the use of appropriate, effective and inclusive practises. The policy will guide the delivery of community and stakeholder engagement across the organisation to support decision-making, build relationships and strengthen communities.

The objectives of the policy are to:

- provide the public with a clear understanding of Council's commitment to community and stakeholder engagement;
- achieve good governance by facilitating open and honest communication with stakeholders and the community on programmes, projects and initiatives that may impact their lives;
- raise awareness of Council decisions and community aspirations surrounding programmes, projects and initiatives; and
- allow for informed decision-making to collectively achieve an improved quality of life in the City of Bayswater.

POLICY STATEMENT:

The Community Engagement Policy should be applied at the Scoping Phase of any programme, project and initiative, or when a change in service, activity or infrastructure is considered. Community engagement is the responsibility of all Council staff and contractors.

Community engagement is the responsibility of all Council service areas, teams and employees as appropriate to their role and function. To ensure the effective application of community engagement across the City, community engagement: guidelines; tools; and templates; have been developed to provide guidance for Council employees.

Council's Community Engagement Policy is built upon a set of commitments that guide the scoping, planning, implementation and evaluation of community engagement processes undertaken by Council. These commitments are built upon the core values identified by the International Association for Public Participation (IAP2). Council commits to:

- being open and transparent about the decision-making process and the challenges and opportunities to be met;
- seeking to involve those community members potentially affected by, or interested in, a decision as early as possible in the decision-making process;

- ensuring that the purpose of our engagement is clear and relevant, and that the level of engagement is appropriate to the decision being made (not over or under engaging);
- ensuring that the methods used are well suited to generate highly-effective and inclusive community engagement from a broad section of the community;
- providing information that is clear, easy to understand, and accessible to the community;
- incorporating the community's views into the decision-making process to the agreed level of participation and reporting back to the community how their input was considered and influenced the decision; and
- evaluating our community engagement processes to continually improve our approach to community engagement.

Good governance is based on a belief that those impacted by a decision may have important contributions to make in a decision-making process. In planning a community engagement process, Council will determine at which levels they will engage and what corresponding commitment they will make to the community and/or stakeholders. This decision is likely to impact the nature and methods of engagement; the final decision rests with the City of Bayswater.

Council decision-making processes are influenced by several factors such as financial and resource considerations, political directives and environmental and social concerns. As such if a difference occurs between the level of engagement and the Council's final decision, the reasons will be clearly stated.

How do we engage?

The level of engagement that is selected for the process will determine how the feedback is used within the Council and the decision-making process.

There is no 'one-size fits all' approach to community engagement activities. A variety of methods will be required to cater for the different purposes of engagement as well as the broad range of groups and individuals in the community.

DEFINITIONS

IAP2

The International Association for Public Participation is an international organisation advancing the practice of public participation. IAP2 supports people who implement or participate in public decision-making processes.

Community engagement

Refers to the range of opportunities for involving people, in a meaningful way, in the decisions that affect their lives; it needs to be a purposeful and planned process.



Community

Includes individuals or groups who live, work, play, study, visit, invest in, or pass through the City of Bayswater local government area.

Good governance

Effective processes for making and implementing decisions.

RELATED LEGISLATION:

The roles and function of local government in Western Australia are governed by the *Local Government Act 1995*. The engagement of the community is indispensable in Council's achievement of these roles.

Local councils in Western Australia are legally required to conduct public consultation through a prescribed process on a range of specific matters.

RELATED DOCUMENTATION:

All of Council's strategic documents are linked to an Integrated Planning Framework. This framework seeks to ensure that all of Council's activities and resources are aligned to meet the aspirations, needs and expectations of the Bayswater community.

Community engagement underpins the development of the Integrated Planning Framework and ensures that community needs and aspirations are considered in developing and implementing Council's strategic directions and priorities.

This policy reflects the strategic aspiration of the Bayswater City Council's Corporate Business Plan 2015 – 2019 *"We will provide responsible leadership and governance and be recognised for operating with integrity and delivering quality services"*, outcome L3: *"An engaged and informed community"*.

Relevant Delegations		
Risk Evaluation		
Council Adoption	Date	2 August 2016