

## CCSP 23 Community Consultation and Stakeholder Engagement Policy

*This policy was adopted by Council to set governing principles in place that align the strategic direction of the organisation with Goal 5 - Effective leadership and governance.*

### Objective

The objective of this policy is to provide guidance to Councillors and Officers in the planning, implementation and evaluation of community and stakeholder engagement activities. This policy will support community involvement in key projects, plans, strategy and policy development, and ensure consultation on planning proposals is undertaken in accordance with legislative requirements.

This framework provides a basis for informed decision-making, post consultation analysis and Shire-wide learning, and is informed by the Asset Based Community Development (ABCD), the IAP2 model by the International Association for Public Participation, and the Institute of Public Works Engineering Australia (IPWEA) Practice Note 8: Levels of Service.

### Policy

The following principles shall apply to Shire community and stakeholder engagement processes:

#### 1. Commitment

The Shire is committed to using its best endeavours to meet the needs of current and future generations through the integration of environmental protection, social advancement and economic prosperity. The Shire is also committed to providing leadership and a strong commitment to community engagement in policy-making and key projects by following triple bottom line principles, which will follow one of the following three levels of community engagement:

- 1.1 Inform level: To provide balanced and objective information in a timely manner;
- 1.2 Consult level: To obtain feedback on analysis, issues, alternatives and decisions;
- 1.3 Involve level: To work with the public to make sure that concerns and aspirations are considered and understood.

#### 2. Rights

The community of Augusta Margaret River has a right to access information, provide feedback, be consulted and actively participate in policy-making and key projects. Shire's obligations to respond to the community when exercising these rights will be clearly stated in specific organisational processes and will comply with the Shire's Privacy Policy.



### **3. Clarity**

Objectives for, and limits to, information, consultation and active participation during policy-making and key projects will be defined from the outset. The respective roles and responsibilities of the community (including individuals and groups) and the Shire (including Councillors and officers) will be clear to all. The Shire will ensure there is clarity in relation to who will make final decisions, and how and when.

### **4. Methodology**

The approach for specific community and stakeholder engagement activities will be tailored to the target audiences and guided by the appropriate level of engagement. This includes consideration of multiple communication channels and provision of participatory community workshops within the available budget and other principles outlined in this policy.

### **5. Time**

Community engagement will be undertaken as early in the project process as possible to allow a greater range of solutions to emerge and to increase the chances of successful implementation. Adequate time will be made available within project plans for community and stakeholder engagement to be effective.

### **6. Objectivity**

Information provided by the Shire during policy-making and key projects will be objective, complete and accessible. All those involved in community and stakeholder engagement process will have equal treatment when exercising their rights of access to information and participation.

### **7. Resources**

The Shire will ensure adequate financial, human and technical resources are available for effective community and stakeholder engagement. The allocation of resources will be considered in relation to broader budgetary restraints and the implications to existing priorities. The Shire will support its officers in community and stakeholder engagement activities.

### **8. Coordination**

The Shire will strive to coordinate community engagement across key projects so they are appropriately scheduled to enhance knowledge management, ensure coherence, avoid duplication and reduce the risk of “engagement fatigue” within the community.

### **9. Accountability**

The Shire will be accountable for the application of feedback from community and stakeholder engagement activities. The Shire will ensure these processes are open, and transparent to external scrutiny and review.

### **10. Evaluation**

The Shire will actively and openly evaluate its community and stakeholder engagement practices in key projects. The results of evaluation will impact upon future consultation initiatives.

The evaluation of consultation projects will occur within project and business planning processes which will include ongoing communication with identified stakeholder groups.

Measures of success of consultation will include assessments of whether:

- a) The interests of all parties have been considered;
- b) Expectations concerning the process have been met;



- c) Consensus, consent and commitment have emerged;
- d) The process has encouraged generation of the best options;
- e) Objective criteria have been used to assess the different options under consideration;
- f) Understanding of the project has been enhanced within the community;
- g) Relationships between the Shire and the community and within the community have been enhanced; and
- h) The decision resulting from the engagement has been stable and enduring.

## 11. Legislation

Where a statute sets out requirements for consultation (for example, town planning matters) the Shire will, as a minimum, comply with the requirements set out therein. Relevant legislation includes the Planning and Development (Local Planning Schemes) Regulations 2015, *Planning & Development Act 2005*, Residential Design Codes, and the *Local Government Act 1995*.

## Definitions

### Community Engagement

Community engagement is a planned two-way process by which specific, identified groups of the community are given the opportunity to provide input that enhances decision making processes on issues that may impact on their well-being or interests.

Community engagement strengthens the trust between the community and the Shire by providing a platform for the community to have their voices heard, their views considered and acknowledged, and they're informed of, and involved in, issues which may impact on their lives. (Adapted from: Department of Environment and Sustainability *Effective Engagement: building relationships with community and stakeholders*, Book 1, 2005).

### Asset Based Community Development (ABCD)

Communities drive development, identify and mobilise existing and unrecognised assets and respond to creating local economic opportunity.

### Key project

A key project for the Shire is defined as any organisational project that falls within the following criteria:

- Projects classified as a major project – projects with a budget of \$150,000 plus
- Projects flagged as a CEO Priority
- Projects involving multiple funding providers or are politically sensitive, or
- Projects involving issues which may be high risk.

## Application

Responsibility for the implementation of this policy rests with the Council, CEO and staff of the Shire of Augusta-Margaret River. The Policy is to be reviewed every three years.

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