

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT FRAMEWORK



Document version control

The Community Engagement Framework will be monitored and reviewed regularly to ensure compliance with legislative change, innovation in practice and community expectations.

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‘Community engagement is a planned process with the specific purpose of working across organisations, stakeholders and communities to shape our decisions or actions in relation to a problem, opportunity or outcome.’

International Association of Public Participation

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

What is community engagement?

Community engagement is the planned process where Derwent Valley Council works together with the community to help shape decisions or actions, achieve common goals, and foster relationships built on trust, goodwill and respect.

Community engagement helps to inform Council's decision-making process, ensuring that the final decisions made by the Council are well-informed, and consider the views of stakeholders and the community.

Effective community engagement is the basis for understanding decisions, sharing perspectives, improving outcomes, and building trust between Council, the community and other partners.

What are the benefits of effective community engagement?

Delivering effective community engagement will:

- Ensure community needs and expectations are understood and reflected in the decisions and actions of Council;
- Result in fully-informed, more sustainable decisions;
- Build trust and improve accountability through transparency of decision-making;
- Value local knowledge and foster local problem-solving;
- Improve understanding of Council's planning, prioritising and resourcing;
- Identify critical issues and opportunities early;
- Optimize use of limited resources and maximize efficient resource allocation.

Council's legislative responsibilities and future Local Government reforms.

The Local Government Act 1993 sets out the functions and powers of Tasmanian councils in Section 20. Those functions include, 'to represent and promote the interests of the community' (Section 20(1)). In performing its functions, Council is to 'consult, involve and be accountable to the community' (Section 20(2)).

A reform process is currently underway by the Tasmanian Government to update the Local Government Act. New legislation is expected in the coming months.

The proposed reform directions for the new Local Government Act specify that all Council's will need to adopt a community engagement strategy that outlines how they will engage, involve, consult and inform their communities on plans, projects and policies. The strategy is to be developed by councils in conjunction with their communities after each election.

The development of this framework is inline with the proposed reform directions. It is expected that the framework will be reviewed once the new legislation is enacted.



LOCAL GOVERNMENT AND DECISION MAKING

Local Government in the Derwent Valley

The system of Local Government in Tasmania is governed by the Local Government Act 1993.

Local Government elections are held every four years by postal ballot. In the Derwent Valley, voters elect eight Councillors, including the Mayor and Deputy Mayor, to form the Council and represent them.

Council holds meetings each month, and makes decisions through local democratic processes which are both representative and participatory.

Representative Democracy

Representative democracy is the process by which the community elects Councillors to be the governing body of the Council.

The elected Council develops and implements policies, programs and long-term strategic plans, ensures financial stability, monitors performance, and makes decisions to direct and control the affairs of Council. The elected Council is the final decision maker and is accountable to the community.

Key Council decisions are made at formal Council meetings held monthly. At each meeting Council considers items in an agenda. Each item has a corresponding report prepared by Council staff. The results of community engagement are included in the reports, along with other relevant information, and recommendations. The elected Councillors consider the report and recommendation, and then vote to make a decision at a Council meeting. The decision is called a resolution of Council.

Council meeting agendas and minutes are available to view on Council's website. Community members may attend and submit questions at Council meetings.

Participatory Democracy

Participative democracy is the process by which community members are actively involved in decisions that affect them. The community can participate through a variety of planned community engagement activities that influence and shape the elected Council's decisions.

Council engages the community across a wide variety of areas, including to:

- Determine strategic plans, and service levels;
- Identify community issues, needs and priorities;
- Plan, change or evaluate programs, facilities or services;
- Meet legislative obligations;
- Obtain input into any other matter where there is a significant real or perceived impact on community members.

Opportunities for the community to participate in community engagement activities vary according to the project stage, engagement objectives, level of public impact/interest, and stakeholder needs.

Outcomes of community engagement activities are reported to Council and form part of the elected members considerations when making decisions.

COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT IN COUNCIL DECISIONS

The Derwent Valley community has a strong desire to have a voice in Council decision making.

Results from a community survey held in June 2021 indicated that over ninety percent of survey participants were interested in having a say on Council's plans and strategies. (DVC Communications and Engagement Survey June 2021)

Council recognises that local knowledge, ideas and feedback from the community are essential to ensure Council's decision-making improves community outcomes and wellbeing.

Council has developed this framework to ensure that community engagement activities are conducted in a transparent way, to a high standard, and that they follow clear and consistent processes.

The framework reinforces the commitment to engage with the community about decisions that will affect their lives. It supports engagement activities that are inclusive and accessible to community members, and that feedback received during an engagement process is listened to, respected, and taken into consideration when decisions are made.

The Community Engagement Framework outlines the steps and principles of Council's community

engagement process. It provides guidance on how the Council will engage with the community and stakeholders when making decisions, delivering services or representing the community on particular issues.

This framework is based on a set of principles, and recognises that engagement is a planned process which should be tailored to particular circumstances, taking into account complexity, risk, significance, sensitivity, timing and opportunity.

This framework does not supersede processes related to Derwent Valley Council's role as a planning authority, which requires it to follow specific legal and statutory requirements.

Framework objectives

The objectives of this framework are to support Derwent Valley Council to:

- Continue to deliver good governance by embracing transparent and constructive dialogue with stakeholders and the wider community
- Provide a basis for more informed decision making
- Providing opportunities for the community to participate in engagement processes
- Provide the community with a clear understanding of Derwent Valley Council's engagement processes.
- Increase the efficiency and value of community engagement conducted by Council.

Strategic Plan alignment

This framework aligns with the Outcome 8 of Council's Strategic Plan, Our Valley 2030, 'The Plan is implemented through effective and transparent governance and partnerships.' and is driven by Strategic Action 8.9 'Council will partner with other government organisations and the community to deliver benefits to the community.' A key indicator for Outcome 8 is 'The community feel they have a say in what Council does'.

Related Plans and Strategies

The framework is supported by the following documents:

- Our Valley 2030 Derwent Valley Council Strategic Plan
- Derwent Valley Council Community Engagement Policy
- Derwent Valley Council Customer Service Charter
- International Association of Public Participation (IAP2) Quality Assurance Standard

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT FRAMEWORK

The Community Engagement Framework provides a structure for the way in which Derwent Valley Council delivers community engagement activities and embraces community input to help inform Council decision making.

The framework serves as a reference for how Council will approach engagement, and what the community should expect from Council in the delivery of engagement activities.

The framework consists of four components that when combined, ensure that Council delivers effective community engagement.

These components include a **Commitment** to embed community engagement throughout the whole of council operations.

This will be guided through a Council **Policy** that sets out the scope, policy position, and guiding principles Council will use when undertaking community engagement.

People are the third element of the framework. This refers to trained Council staff involved in engagement activities, engagement consultants and practitioners that we work with, and the stakeholders, and wider community that we will engage with.

The final element is Council's **Process** and systems for engagement. These are clearly defined to provide consistency across projects.

Community Engagement Framework	
Commitment	Whole-of-Council commitment to effective community engagement.
Policy	Provides guidance on Council's approach to engagement, principles on which it delivers engagement activities. Provides linkages to other Council strategies and plans.
People	Clearly defined roles and responsibilities for those involved in engagement - including the community and stakeholders.
Process	The steps Derwent Valley Council will follow when designing and delivering a community engagement project.

Who does the Framework apply to?

The Community Engagement Framework applies to Derwent Valley Council elected members, staff and contractors and external consultants commissioned by Council to undertake or participate in a community engagement project or activity.

The framework does not apply to Council in its role as a planning authority as this role has its own processes governed by legislation. It also does not apply to other planning authorities, such as Tasmanian Government agencies, who have their own engagement processes.

Why do we need a Community Engagement Framework?

This framework will allow Derwent Valley Council to improve its community engagement practice. It provides a standard process for community engagement in projects to be delivered. This will assist with managing community expectations, and will lead to more informed decision making.

The framework will allow Council to establish and foster an engagement culture across the organisation. This can be achieved by reviewing current processes for consultation, upskilling staff, and using the framework to progressively improve how Council engages with the community and other stakeholders.

The experience gained in implementing this framework will allow Council to quickly adapt to any new community engagement requirements that become mandatory in the upcoming Local Government Act legislation review.

How was the Framework developed?

The Community Engagement Framework has been developed with input from community, Council staff, and elected members. The framework builds on Derwent Valley Council's past experiences in delivering community engagement for projects, plans and strategies.

In preparing this framework, international, national, and Tasmanian examples of best practice community engagement within local government have been reviewed.

A communication and community engagement survey conducted by Council in June 2021 provided community insights that have helped to inform this framework.

The draft framework has been put out for public consultation, and key advisory groups, special committees, and the general public have been invited to make comment.

The Derwent Valley Council Community Engagement Framework is underpinned by the methodology of the International Association for Public Participation (IAP2) www.ipa2.org, considered to be best practice internationally and in Australia.

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT FRAMEWORK

COMMITMENT

By adopting this framework Derwent Valley Council commits to effective engagement with its community and stakeholders on issues that affect them.

This commitment includes taking a whole-of-council approach to fostering an engagement culture throughout the organization.

Our commitment to effective engagement is based on six principles that have been developed to guide the application of the Community Engagement Policy.

A principles-based approach recognises that one size does not fit all and each engagement has a distinct purpose, with a unique set of stakeholders and specific circumstances.

Our guiding principles for effective engagement

Principle 1 – Authentic

- The purpose of the engagement and scope of what's being decided is honestly and clearly communicated (including those aspects of the project the community can influence).
- The decision-making process is clear including how input will be used.
- Community input will not be sought if a decision has already been made.
- Community input is considered in the final decision or outcome.
- Authentic engagement allows for adequate notice and time for community response.

Principle 2 – Transparent

- Information is clear (without jargon), relevant, and timely.
- A summary of community feedback and how it will be used is provided.
- Engagement outcome reports are published.
- The decision or outcome is communicated to people involved in the process and to the broader community with an explanation of how community input influenced the decision.

Principle 3 – Inclusive

- As many people as possible, who have an interest in or will be affected by a decision, are identified, and invited to participate. This is to ensure a diverse range of viewpoints are captured.
- Community diversity is valued, and consideration of different stakeholder audiences, their views and their diverse needs will be made when planning for an engagement.
- Barriers to participation are identified and removed or mitigated.

Principle 4 – Planned

- Engagement is a well-planned process with a clearly defined purpose and stages for community input.
- Planning improves outcomes by engaging community as early as possible in the process and identifying critical issues and opportunities early in the process.
- Planning delivers a coordinated approach to community engagement and ensures Council has considered how individual projects fit into the big picture.

Principle 5 – Partnership

- We seek to build effective relationships based on trust, respect and mutual understanding that will improve the outcomes of community engagement.
- We encourage activities that foster a shared understanding and unite the community.

Principle 6 – Continuous Improvement

- We review and evaluate the engagement that we undertake to learn how we can improve.
- Community satisfaction with our practice of engagement is measured.
- We embrace new methods for engagement which are strategically trialled.

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT FRAMEWORK

POLICY

The Community Engagement Policy sets out the scope, policy position, and guiding principles Council will use when undertaking community engagement.

The policy statement provides clarity on Council's role in engaging with the community and stakeholders.

Policy Statement

- i) Derwent Valley Council is committed to engaging with its community and stakeholders on issues that affect them.
- ii) Council values effective engagement in developing positive relationships with its community and recognises that community participation contributes to better decision-making.
- iii) Council's Community Engagement Framework will guide the delivery of Council's community engagement projects and activities. This framework is informed by International Association of Public Participation (IAP2) Core Values and Public Participation Spectrum.
- iv) Council will consider the opinion, ideas and feedback of our community, and balance these with other influences such as expert advice, resources and budgetary constraints, when making decisions or delivering services.
- v) Council will engage with our communities when in the opinion of Council officers or elected Council members:
 - The view of individuals or groups within our community will provide further information valuable to the planning, solution, or decision.
 - The issue will significantly affect existing levels of service.
 - The issue is complex or controversial.
 - The issue will have long term impact on the community.
 - When it is a legislative requirement.
- vi) There may be circumstances under which community engagement is impractical. Such as where emergency response is required, or a statutory process may be compromised.
- vii) The level of community participation in the decision making and the engagement method used will be determined by factors including the level of impact of the issue, time and resources available or any legal requirements.
- viii) Council will as much as possible commit appropriate levels of resourcing to the delivery of effective community engagement.
- ix) In applying this policy, Council will demonstrate our values of Quality Service, Collaboration, Growth, Integrity and Wellbeing.

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT FRAMEWORK

PEOPLE

Community engagement is a shared responsibility. We all have a role to play in participatory decision making that shapes the places where we live, work and play. There are roles for both Council and the community in initiating, leading, participating in and delivering engagement activities.

Role	Responsibilities
Community, businesses, and other stakeholders	Support community engagement processes and Council decision-making by seeking information, actively participating in engagement activities, putting forward ideas and promoting consultation opportunities with other stakeholders.
Mayor and Councillors	Champion the commitment and principles of engagement through leadership and decision making
General Manager and Executive Leadership Team	Champion an engagement culture throughout all areas of the organisation. Manage teams and projects to ensure engagement is undertaken and consistent with Council policy.
Communications and Engagement Team	Oversee the Community Engagement Framework and collaborate with Council staff across the organisation to ensure engagement planning and delivery is consistent with Council policy.
Council staff	Ensure that Community Engagement is planned for and is consistent with Council policy. Staff should seek advice from the Communications and Engagement Team and/or management if additional support for engagement is required.

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT FRAMEWORK

PROCESS

A Community Engagement Process has been developed by Council to ensure we deliver community engagement activities in a consistent way. This process has been informed by the IAP2 Quality Assurance Standard which represents best practice in delivering community engagement projects.

Our Community Engagement Process is made up of five stages.

1. Plan

The first and most important stage is to PLAN the engagement. During this stage the purpose and scope of engagement is defined, stakeholders will be identified and prioritised, methods of engagement chosen, risks for the engagement identified, and evaluation criteria set. The key output for this stage is a written *Engagement Plan* which will be used by Council staff as a reference point throughout the engagement project.

2. Implement

Once the plan is finalized, implementation can begin. This involves preparation of any materials and content, implementing any communication plan, and delivering the engagement activities. This is the stage that involves input from the community, and where stakeholders actively participate in the process.

3. Analyse

Once the engagement activities are delivered, the data and information collected needs to be analysed and reviewed. This is done against the criteria defined in step 1—the planning stage. Results from

the engagement could provide exactly what is needed to help Council make informed decisions, or there may be some gaps in our knowledge that appear, which will need further stakeholder input to resolve.

Outputs from the engagement activities will be documented in an Engagement Summary Report.

4. Decide

Once the engagement activities are complete and the data analysed, a decision on what to do with the information gained needs to be made.

Depending on the purpose of the engagement (as defined in stage 1 of this process) a Council Report may be prepared that references the engagement outcomes.

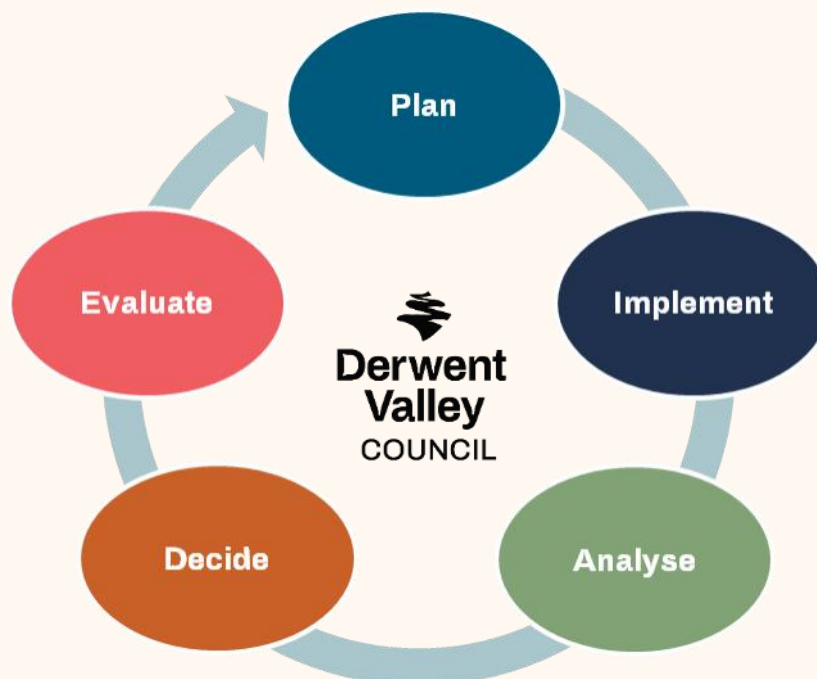
Once any final decision is known, efforts will be put into 'closing the loop' with stakeholders who participated in the process, by informing them of how their feedback was used, and what the final outcome was.

5. Evaluate

The final stage in our engagement process is to evaluate what was done. With hindsight it may be possible to identify where things went wrong and how they could have been improved. Devoting time to evaluation and reflection is critical refining our engagement practice.

The following diagram summarises Derwent Valley Council's Community Engagement Process.

Our Community Engagement Process



1. Plan	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Set purpose, objective, timeline, and scope. Understand strategic links, drivers and background. Identify and analyse stakeholders and set participation level. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Set engagement stages. Plan communication and engagement methods. Plan evaluation .
2. Implement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Prepare engagement materials. Deliver communication and engagement program . 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Monitor and respond. Adapt plan if necessary .
3. Analyse	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Collect, collate and analyse community responses. Gap analysis – decide if further engagement is required. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Produce engagement outcomes summary report .
4. Decide	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Prepare Council Report referencing engagement outcomes. Elected Council receives report and makes decision . 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Communicate decision made or outcome.
5. Evaluate	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Debrief on outcome of engagement project Review and refine processes. Share learnings with staff to facilitate continual improvement . 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Store data and documentation in accordance Council's records management and privacy policy.



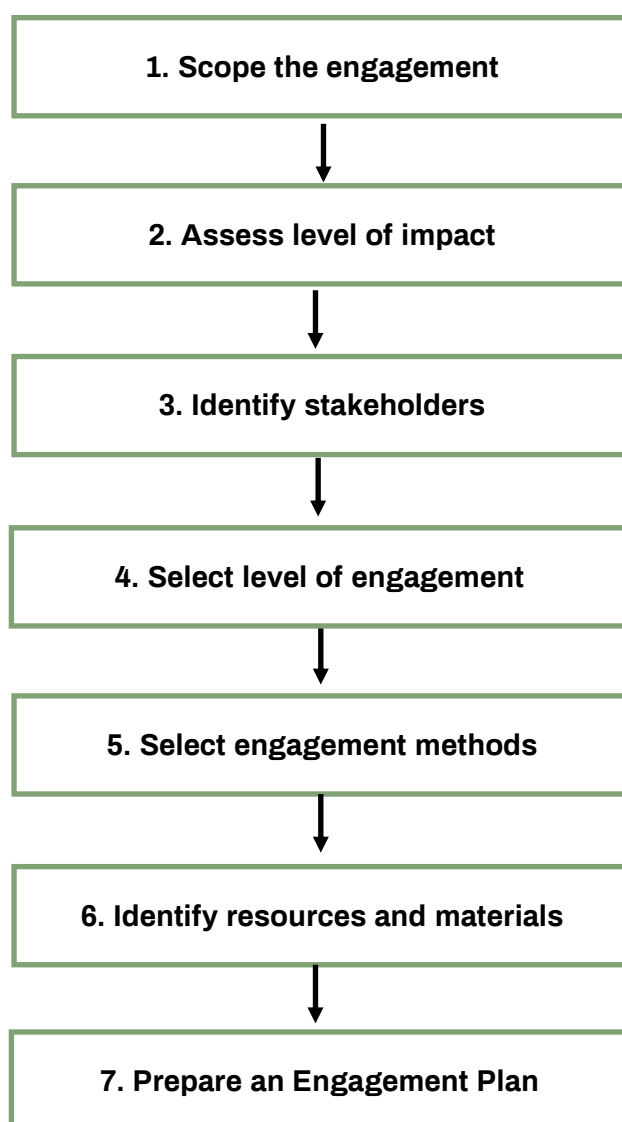
PLANNING FOR ENGAGEMENT

The following section provides further detail on the considerations, processes, and tools Council will use when planning Community Engagement.

Every engagement is different. There will be different stakeholders impacted, different project objectives, different circumstances. Our engagement approach needs to consider these variables, and be adaptable to the needs of the project, and that of the stakeholders involved.

The planning phase of engagement involves several stages. Each stage is described in the following pages.

Engagement Planning Stages



PLANNING FOR ENGAGEMENT

1. Scope the engagement

The first step in planning for engagement is to define a purpose and scope for the engagement. When scoping an engagement Council staff involved in the engagement project will run through a series of questions to create a clearer picture of what the engagement hopes to achieve.

Has a decision already been made?

Community engagement is about seeking stakeholder input to help inform decision making. If a decision has already been made there may be no need for engagement. In this case a communications plan may be more appropriate to inform stakeholders of the decision.

How much community engagement is required?

This will be determined by how significant the decision is. Assessing the level of impact can help to determine the importance of an issue, proposal or decision and can help determine how much investment is devoted to an engagement.

Other questions that may be helpful to consider when planning an engagement are:

- What question do we hope to answer by conducting this engagement?
- What are the expectations of the community?
- Who is involved in making the decision, and who will be affected by it?
- What time, budget, and resources do we have to complete the engagement?
- Where should the engagement be held?
- How will the engagement be measured?
- Have we previously engaged on this issue?

PLANNING FOR ENGAGEMENT

2. Assessing the level of impact

The Council will assess the importance of an issue, proposal or decision on the basis of its likely impact on the people expected to be most affected by or to have an interest in the matter, as well as the Council's capacity to perform its role, and the financial and other costs of doing so.

The greater the impact or significance of the issue/proposal/decision the more effort will be invested by Council in engaging with stakeholders.

The level of impact or significance of an issue, proposal or decision can be determined using the following table.

Level of Impact / Significance	Description	Criteria	Example
Level 1 High Impact LGA Community Engagement plan is essential.	Issue has higher level of real or perceived impact on the whole or large parts of the Derwent Valley .	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Potential for conflict High level of community interest Impact on health, safety and wellbeing 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Strategic plans Significant strategies/ plans/policies/major facilities Changes to core services
Level 2 High Impact Local Area Community Engagement plan is essential.	Issue has higher level of real or perceived impact on a specific town, local areas, community or user group.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Removal or change to facility or service for local community Potential for local conflict Local interest 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Major road works or street closure Upgrades to parks, sports grounds
Level 3 Lower impact LGA Community Engagement plan is desirable.	Issue has lower level of real or perceived impact on the whole or large parts of Derwent Valley.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Potential for some controversy or conflict Minor changes to large ongoing programs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Major road works or street closure Upgrades to parks, sports grounds
Level 4 Lower impact Local Community Engagement plan is not required. A communications plan may be more appropriate.	Issue has lower level of real or perceived impact on a specific town, local areas, community or user group.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Minor changes to a facility or service at a local level Low potential for controversy or conflict at a local level 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Regular road maintenance Changes in time and venue for community activity Minor upgrades to parks, playgrounds, street furniture, and signage.

PLANNING FOR ENGAGEMENT

3. Identifying Stakeholders

As part of the planning phase of a community engagement project, Council will identify stakeholders and promote opportunities for participation to ensure a range of perspectives are heard, and the community's needs, values and expectations are represented.

Stakeholders refer to any person or group of persons who have or feel they have an interest, or can affect/be affected by an issue or decision. Stakeholders can be internal or external.

Stakeholders vary in their level of interest, influence, power or impact relative to any issue. When planning an engagement, Council will focus efforts on stakeholders who have an interest in an issue, or who are impacted the most by a decision.

As part of the engagement planning process, Identified potential stakeholders will be assessed based on their interest in an issue or how they may be impacted by a decision. This will help determine what priority, and therefore time and resources, Council will give to engaging with this stakeholder.

Inclusive participation

Some communities are hard to reach as they may have special needs or barriers to participation that impact on inclusion. These barriers may include literacy, accessibility, cultural, time constraints, or live in a remote area.

Community engagement activities should be sensitively planned for the intended audience and may need to provide opportunities that mitigate these barriers including:

- Providing information in a variety of formats including online and offline.
- Appropriate time of day for the target group.
- Appropriate method for the target group.
- Accessible venues and/or suitable locations.
- Assistance where needed to participate.

Advisory and reference groups

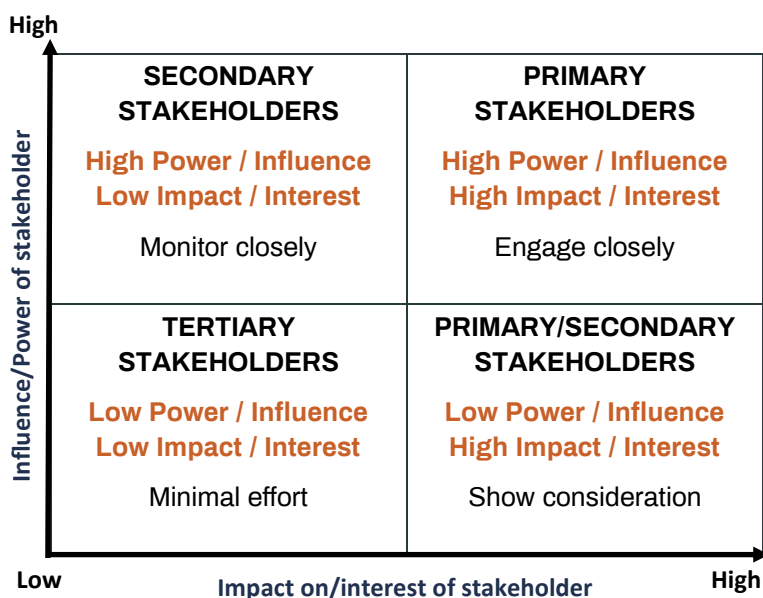
Council may appoint representatives from the community and other stakeholders to be members of advisory panels and reference groups to provide advice and input on specific issues or projects to support Council's decision-making and actions. Advisory panels and reference groups do not have delegation or decision-making powers.

Council Special Committees may be identified as stakeholders in an engagement process. Although they may not necessarily have delegated authority over any decision making or final outcome from the engagement process, feedback from a special committee would be considered in the same way as other stakeholders in an engagement process.

Examples of stakeholder groups

- Derwent Valley Residents
- Derwent Valley Ratepayers
- Aboriginal and Torres strait Islander community
- Business and industry groups
- Children and families
- Community groups
- Council's advisory bodies, working groups, and special committees
- Councillors
- Future residents / community
- Internal stakeholders across Council's departments
- LGBTIQ community
- Local businesses
- Non-government organisations (NGOs) and service providers
- Other councils
- People connected by a common interest or by a place
- People from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds
- People living with a disability
- Schools and education providers
- Seniors and older people
- Service/facility users
- Service providers
- State and Federal Government departments and agencies
- Students
- Tourists / visitors
- Volunteers
- Youth

Assessing impact on stakeholders



PLANNING FOR ENGAGEMENT

5. Level of engagement

Derwent Valley Council uses the International Association of Public Participation (IAP2) Spectrum of Public Participation to guide our engagement planning.

The IAP2 Spectrum reflects best practice, and is a widely recognized tool. It identifies five levels of participation with increasing influence along the spectrum — *Inform, Consult, Involve, Collaborate, Empower*.

For each level there is a corresponding goal, commitment and role for Council and the community in the processes.

Council will determine the amount of resources, time and depth of an engagement depending on the level of impact, significance, risk or opportunities of the circumstances of a project or decision.

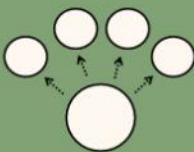
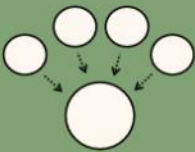
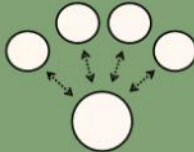
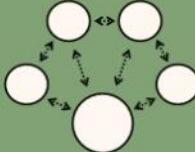
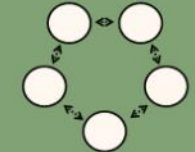
During the planning process for an engagement, Council will set a participation level which indicates what influence engagement participants can have on the final decision.

When setting participation levels Council will take into account:

- What participants expect
- What participants can and can't influence
- What assumptions or constraints are impacting the process

There may often be more than one level of engagement used across a project depending on the stage, scope, timeline and stakeholders involved, as well as the influence and impact identified.

IAP2 Spectrum of Public Participation

	INFORM	CONSULT	INVOLVE	COLLABORATE	EMPOWER
					
Goal	To provide our community with balanced and clear information that helps them to understand an issue, or lets them know when something is happening or about to happen.	To seek and consider community feedback on alternatives, proposals and decisions we need to make.	To work directly with our community throughout the process to ensure that concerns and aspirations are understood, considered and incorporated where appropriate.	To partner with our community in identifying alternatives, developing solutions and co-designing a jointly agreed outcome.	To place final decision making in the hands of our community, build their capacity to identify solutions and lead or deliver change.
Our commitment to community	We will keep you informed.	We will listen to and acknowledge your concerns and aspirations and provide feedback on how your input influenced the decisions.	We will work with you to ensure what we've heard is directly reflected in the alternatives developed and provide feedback on how your input influenced the decisions.	We will work together in co-designing solutions, and as much as possible, incorporate your advice and proposals into the decisions.	We will work alongside you to realise your decisions and aspirations.
The role of community	Listen	Contribute	Participate	Partner	Partner or Lead
Engagement type	Informative	Consultative	Deliberative	Deliberative	Deliberative

PLANNING FOR ENGAGEMENT

6. Engagement Methods

A program of engagement activities will be determined during the planning stage of an engagement. The engagement methods used may vary depending on the stage of the project. Methods selected should suit the goals of the engagement, and the unique circumstances of the stakeholders being targeted.

When selecting communication and engagement methods, Council will take into account the following:

- How the engagement activity meets the needs of the current stage of the project
- How the chosen engagement activity will deliver the appropriate information to enable the projects progression to the next stage,
- How effective will the activity be in reaching the targeted audience?
- Will the activity meet the community's needs, and is it accessible and appropriate for the targeted stakeholder group?
- Does the design of the engagement activity exclude anyone in the community from participating?
- Will it capture information that can inform and influence the decision-making process in a meaningful way?
- Is there enough time, budget, staff, expertise to deliver the engagement activity?

Some of the communication and engagement methods that Council may use in an engagement project are listed opposite. This is not an exhaustive list, and methods are constantly evolving, especially in the digital space. Council will wherever practicable provide alternative formats and ways for people to engage on a project so as not to exclude anyone from participating.

Example communication channels	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Letters • Emails • Media releases • Advertisements • Social media • Presentations • Signs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Flyers • Newsletters • Posters • Council website • Webinars • Public displays

Example of engagement activities	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Surveys and Polls • Online engagement tools • Drop-in session • Community forums • Workshops • Listening posts in public spaces • Events / pop-up display 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Briefing • Focus group • Door knocking • Site visits • Interviews • Facilitated discussion / round table • Co-design

PLANNING FOR ENGAGEMENT

7. Identify resources and materials

Delivering effective community engagement, comes down to three factors:

- The time available for the engagement process;
- The available budget to execute the community engagement
- The human resources required to prepare for and deliver the community engagement.

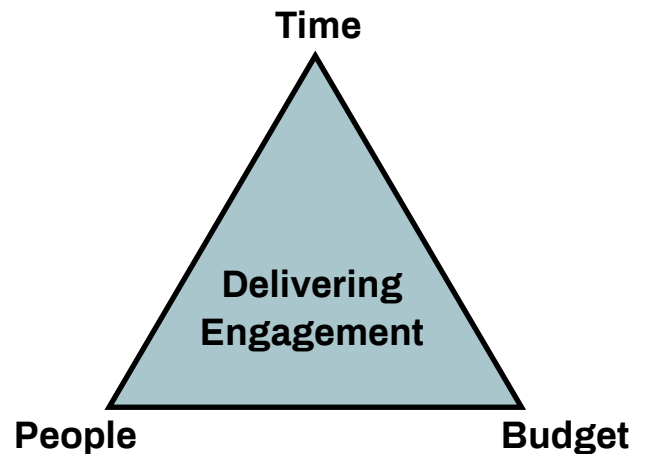
These factors need to be determined and agreed upfront so that the most effective engagement plan can be developed with the resources available.

Assuming there are appropriate levels of time, budget and people to deliver the engagement methods chosen, thought should be given to the materials that will be needed to conduct any engagement activities.

Creating a list of actions required, and who is responsible for them before the engagement is launched can help at this point.

This could include:

- Developing a communications plan to promote the engagement.
- Defining key messages and being very clear on what questions need to be asked and the decision that needs to be made.
- Preparing letters, advertisements and posters.
- Preparing content, FAQs, presentations, displays and printed material.
- Arranging workshop materials.
- Booking venues.
- Organising facilitators.



PLANNING FOR ENGAGEMENT

8. Preparing an engagement plan

Council staff responsible for the engagement will use the information gathered in the previous steps to prepare a community engagement plan.

A written community engagement plan is essential for projects of high significance or impact (Level 1 or Level 2) defined in Step 2 of the planning process, and desirable for medium impact projects (level 3),.

These high profile/high impact projects are likely to have multiple stakeholders with varying interests. The project may have the potential for high conflict, controversy or risk. There may be a requirement for multiple engagement methods to be used, and there may be several phases required. In these scenarios a written engagement plan will provide focus and direction for the planned engagement.

For low impact projects (Level 4) a written engagement plan is not necessary, however this does not necessarily mean that engagement would not take place. Instead it may be done in a more informal way, or focus more on the 'inform' end of the spectrum, where a communications plan may be more relevant.

REPORTING OUTCOMES

At the end of the public engagement period Council staff responsible for the engagement will collate and analyse the data, and prepare an engagement summary report. The engagement summary report is a separate document from any Council report that is prepared, although it may be an attachment to a Council report.

The engagement summary report should be prepared by the person managing the engagement project. The council report should be prepared by the person responsible for the project for which the engagement is being undertaken.

The engagement summary report will reflect the range of views and information collected during the engagement process. It may highlight common themes that have emerged during a consultation process, or statistically report on quantitative data collected.

The engagement summary report should not preempt any final outcome or decision (this authority rests with the elected Council as decision makers).

The engagement summary report should not contain recommendations for the project being consulted on. This should be the subject of the Council report.

The engagement summary report should be made available at the appropriate time on the Council website for engagement participants and the public to view. Usually after it has been reported to Council and endorsed for public release.

Privacy in Community Engagement

Council is committed to protecting the personal information of all participants of its community engagement process. This is outlined in Council's Community Engagement Policy. Personal information collected in any engagement activity will only be used for the purposes of ongoing engagement on the issue by Council. Such information will not be made available to the public.

Engagement summary reports may contain verbatim quotes from participants, however efforts will be made to redact any personal identification/data to protect individual's privacy.

Written submissions received as part of a community engagement process will be considered as available for public inspection in its entirety and may be included in engagement summary reports if requested or deemed necessary, unless confidentiality is specifically requested by the person making the submission.

EVALUATION

Council will evaluate engagement practice to identify how well the objectives were met.

Evaluation will assist in:

- Reporting on outcomes
- Identifying gaps in data collections
- Learning what worked and what didn't
- Strengthening Council's and community's capacity for participation
- Building knowledge and skills
- Continuously improving processes

Evaluation criteria relevant to the engagement will be set in the planning phase of the project. For example criteria may be around numbers of people participating, the demographics of those who participated or the quality of the input.

The evaluation process should involve the wider project team so that includes an element of peer review. Findings from the evaluation process should inform future engagement processes.

The IAP2 Quality Assurance Standard provides a best-practice framework for evaluating engagement projects, and should be referenced during an evaluation process.

DEFINITIONS

Advisory body

A Council appointed group of representatives from the community and other stakeholders used to provide advice and input to support Council's decision-making and actions. Advisory bodies and working groups do not have delegation or decision-making powers.

Activation

An activity or event that engages people with their environment and community through positive creative and social experiences.

Capacity building

The process of strengthening and empowering a community to implement and sustain their own solutions to problems, making them more resilient.

Communications

The process of informing the wider public about projects and community engagement activities. It is often a one-way exchange through various media channels.

Community

An individual or a group of people who share at least one common characteristic such as geography, shared interests, values, experiences, or tradition.

Community development

Community groups and individuals are supported to identify important concerns and opportunities, and to plan and implement strategies to mitigate their concerns and realise aspirations.

Community engagement

A planned process with the specific purpose of working with individuals and groups to encourage active involvement in decisions that affect them or are of interest to them.

IAP2

International Association for Public Participation. The organisation that oversees the development of standards for best practice in engagement and public participation in decision making. Derwent Valley Council's Community Engagement Framework is modeled on the IAP2 Quality Assurance Standard.

Participatory democracy

The process by which community members are actively involved in decisions that affect them through planned engagement activities that influence and shape the elected Council's decisions.

Representative democracy

The process by which the community elects Councillors to be the governing body of the Council.

Stakeholder

An individual or group that has an interest in any Council decision or activity, including Aboriginal communities, other tiers of government, government agencies, businesses, schools, not-for-profits and service providers, tourists and visitors, residents advocacy groups, children and youth, ratepayers, renters, emergency services, religious groups, people living with a disability, older people, and many more.



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