

GUIDE TO PLANNING FOR COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

(This guide has been prepared to assist staff plan community engagement)

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Council's Commitment

The City of Clarence has made a clear commitment through its Strategic Plan 2016-2026 to provide leadership and accessible, responsive, transparent, and accountable governance of the City, by developing and implementing community engagement policies and processes, that provide effective and timely engagement with the Clarence community; to support informed decision-making by council.

Introduction

Well planned community engagement provides opportunities for the Clarence community and other stakeholders to participate in decisions that affect them. Effective community engagement also assists council, as elected representatives, to make informed decisions, to ensure the decisions they make are better understood, and well implemented.

Council's commitment to leadership in community engagement increases community capacity and social capital. This ensures inclusion from a diverse range of the community and provides more opportunities for collaboration and partnerships.

This Guide has been developed for use by the organisation, and is supported by council's:

- Community Engagement Policy - which sets the standards and principles of community engagement in the City of Clarence; and
- Working Together Structure - which represents a strategic approach to how council undertakes its business, providing a framework for a consistent and integrated approach that contributes to our internal organisational culture, which is essential to working effectively with the community.

The Guide also refers to the International Association of Public Participation (IAP2) Public Participation Spectrum, to help contextualise the many approaches and methods of engagement that can be used.

Why Community Engagement is Important

Engaging with the community helps council better understand community needs and aspirations and make informed decisions. Effective community engagement builds trust, increases community capacity and social capital. Communities who share responsibility for

their environments and neighbourhoods, develop skills and confidence in effectively participating in community life, and a greater understanding of the role of local government.

Inclusion and Diversity

Engagement processes must be designed to ensure they are socially inclusive, and reach a diversity of people from all ages, abilities and cultures.

Council's Approach

Developing a planned approach to community engagement begins with a well-defined process that is integrated across council.

To support this council has developed simple guidelines and other practices including the Working Together Structure. The Structure is designed to be used seamlessly across council for any type of council business that requires a working together process, large or small.

Council's approach supports its Community Engagement Policy and refers to the International Association of Public Participation (IAP2) Public Participation Spectrum, to ensure well-planned, consistent, systematic and coordinated methods for community engagement, where expectations are managed to achieve equitable and sustainable outcomes.

Community Engagement Policy

The Community Engagement Policy sets out the standards and principles of community engagement which include:

- ✓ Communicating timely and openly in plain English;
- ✓ Providing information and opportunities for involvement that are meaningful, inclusive, accessible, and seek a diverse range of perspectives;
- ✓ Being clear about how much opportunity there is to participate through the consultation process and to contribute to a decision;
- ✓ Ensuring processes conform with relevant statutory requirements;
- ✓ Using a variety of engagement/consultation techniques to engage with relevant communities and stakeholders;
- ✓ Keeping the community and stakeholders informed, including reasons for decisions;
- ✓ Reviewing completed community engagements to improve council community engagement practices; and
- ✓ Retaining records in accordance with statutory requirements.

Working Together Structure

The Working Together Structure identifies four key themes and principles as council's basis for working together in a planned and integrated way. It also draws on overarching project planning tools, which help to identify if, when, and what type of community engagement is required.

Key Themes	Principles
People	Working with people and communities: consistency and managing expectations.
Planning	Enhancing connectivity within council and across the community: systematic and coordinated approaches.
Resourcing	Balancing short- and long-term competing interests sustainably and equitably: coordinated, equitable and sustainable.
Delivering	Providing timely results that are well planned and resources: evaluation and performance monitoring.

International Association of Public Participation IAP2

Council defines the community's role in a community engagement process by referring to the International Association of Public Participation (IAP2) Public Participation Spectrum. The Spectrum sets out choices, which can be used in multiple combinations, to decide which type/s of engagement with the community will increase the impact on the decision's council make.

The levels defined by IAP2 are:

Inform	To provide the public with balanced and objective information to assist them in understanding the problem, alternatives, opportunities and/or solutions.
Consult	To obtain public feedback on analysis, alternatives and/or decisions.
Involve	To work directly with the public throughout the process to ensure that public concerns and aspirations are consistently understood and considered.
Collaborate	To partner with the public in each aspect of the decision including development of alternatives and the identification of the preferred solution.
Empower	To place the final decision making in the hands of the public.

The Empower type of community engagement which places final decision making in the hands of the public is uncommon within the context of local government, where final decisions are made by council as the elected representatives of the community.

The Approach in Action

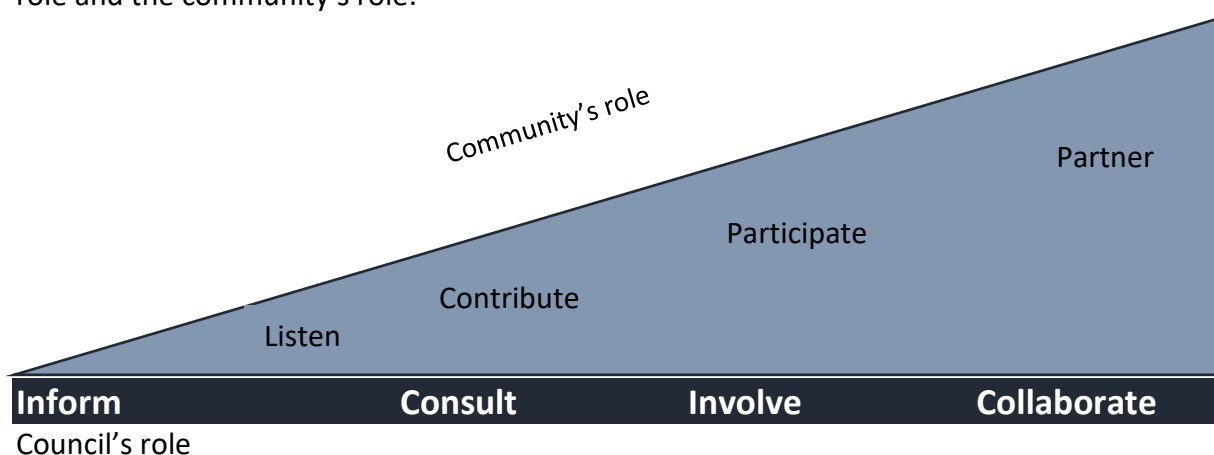
Council's Community Engagement Policy principles in combination with the Working Together Structure, and use of the IAP2 Public Participation Spectrum, ensure a planned approach that takes into consideration:

- Council's decision-making role and legislative requirements;
- Risk management assessments and council policies/plans; and the
- Extent of impact on the community.

All of these elements are important to consider when scoping and planning projects and when deciding on methods to engage with the community. The scope and methods used will be dependent on the particular project or issue, and the level of control that council has over the project management and engagement process.

The IAP2 Public Participation Spectrum is particularly useful in helping to identify not only the mix of different types that can be used, but also the level of impact these will have on council's decision-making role. Because the Empower type of community engagement is uncommon within the context of local government, where final decisions are made by council as the elected representatives of the community, this type has not been included.

The following diagram demonstrates the types and the impacts on council's decision-making role and the community's role:



Types of community engagment = increasing impact on council's decision making



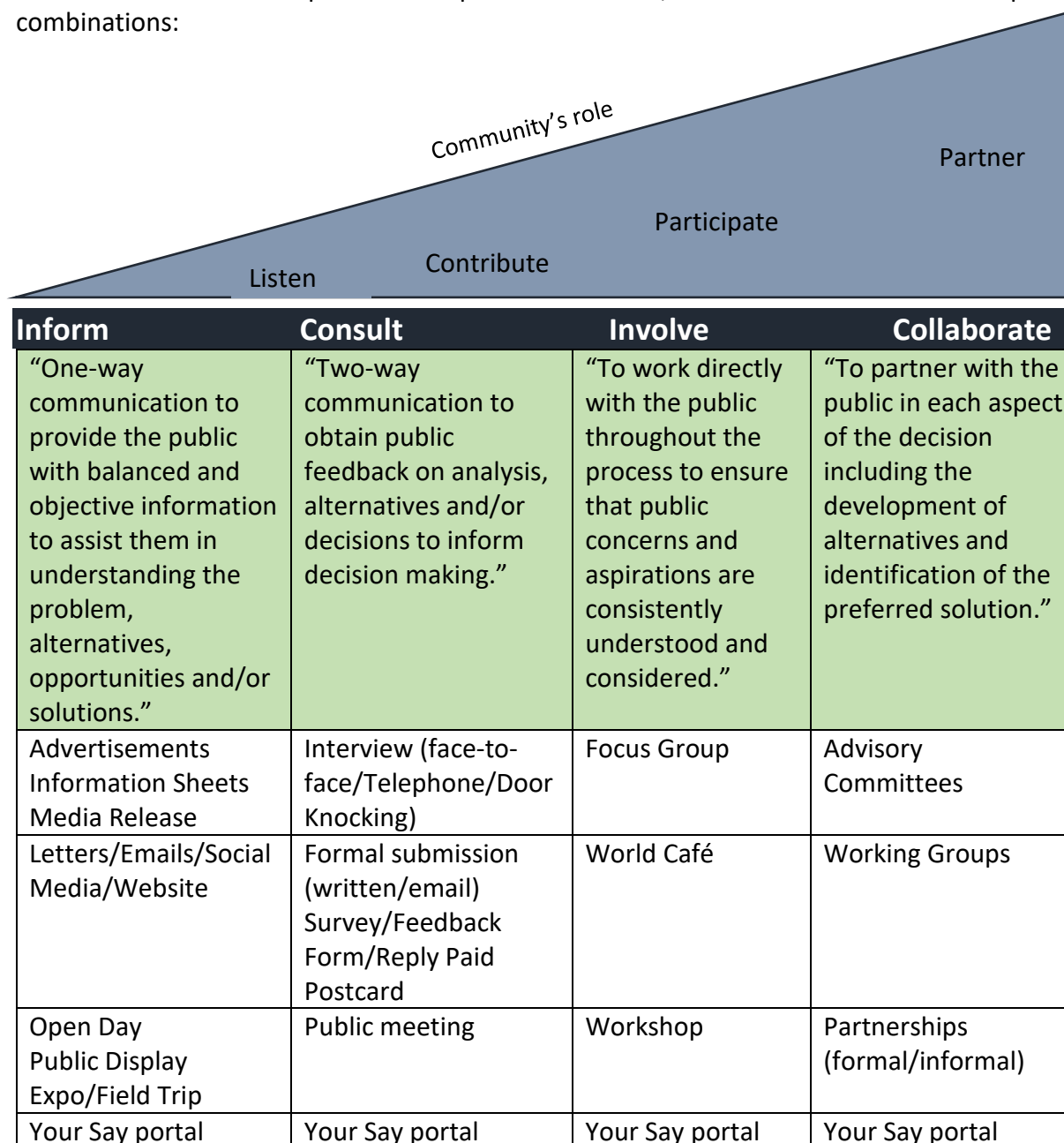


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Methods

Each type of community engagement has a variety of methods that can be used depending on the project or issue, and what council's decision-making role is in regard to that project or issue. Below are examples of some possible methods, which are often used in multiple combinations:



For more detailed information on these methods, the community engagement templates, please refer to the Community Engagement Resources section on the Council.

Acknowledgements

International Association for Public Participation, *IAP2 Public Participation Spectrum* –
<https://www.iap2.org.au>

Bang the Table, Engagement HQ software

East Gippsland Shire Council, Community Engagement Policy, 2017

Greater Dandenong Council, Community Engagement Policy and Planning Framework, 2018

Clarence City Council, Working Together Structure (draft), 2019

Attachments

IAP2 Public Participation Spectrum

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 in understanding 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 the 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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Working Together Structure Key Themes and Principles





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PEOPLE

**Working with
people and
communities**

Principle:
Consistency and
managing expectations



PLANNING

**Enhancing connectivity
within Council and
across the community**

Principle: Systematic and
coordinated approaches



RESOURCING

**Balancing short and
long term competing
interests sustainably
and equitably**

Principle: Coordinated,
equitable and sustainable



DELIVERING

**Providing timely
results that are well
planned and resourced**

Principle: Evaluation and
performance monitoring