

DISTRICT COUNCIL OF LOWER EYRE PENINSULA

Community Engagement Strategy



“Working with our Rural & Coastal Communities”



CR-POL-03 - COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT STRATEGY

Version No:	1.1
Issued:	April 2017
Next Review:	April 2019

Responsibility:	Governance
Minutes reference:	C659 (1)
Related Policies/Procedures/Codes:	Code of Conduct – Elected Members Code of Conduct – Employees CR-POL-01 – Media CR-POL-02 – Public consultation
Review Frequency:	Biennially

1. INTRODUCTION

The District Council of Lower Eyre Peninsula seeks to specialise in all aspects of managing a diverse Rural and Coastal Council, and the involvement of the community in Council decision making is seen as critical in achieving this goal. Effective communication with local communities in decision making maximises the knowledge and experience upon which decisions are made, and leads to better outcomes for all.

Feedback gained from engaging with the community helps Council to understand varied points of view, gather comprehensive information, consider a range of options and identify common ground with stake holders.

Community engagement does not replace the final decision making power of Council, but is considered invaluable in the way it enhances Council’s capacity to make well informed, acceptable and sustainable decisions.

This Community Engagement Strategy supports Council’s Public Consultation Policy (CR-POL-02) which has been adopted in accordance with Section 50 of the Local Government Act 1999. The Public Consultation policy sets out the steps that Council will follow in cases where the Act specifically requires the Council to follow its public consultation policy, and sets out steps that Council will follow in other cases of Council decision making.

The Public Consultation Policy also sets out potential stakeholders with whom Council will seek to engage and identifies a range of options to be used by Council to communicate information and invite community feedback.

The Community Engagement Strategy goes beyond the intent of the Public Consultation Policy, and reflects the Councils Strategic Plan 2012 – 2021 objective to communicate effectively with rate payers and residents, in particular it aims:

- To ensure a commitment by Council members and Council staff to engage with the community in a meaningful and appropriate manner in regard to decisions that affect them.
- To promote the services and activities of Council to ensure they are fully understood by the community.

(continued):



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1. INTRODUCTION cont'd:

- To develop a high level of trust and confidence between Council and the community to engender a long term shared vision and commitment for the District Council of Lower Eyre Peninsula.
- To develop an environment where existing and new communities of interest seek to build productive relationships with the Council.
- To utilise new engagement methods including on line techniques to compliment traditional engagement techniques aimed at increasing the level of community interest in Council activities.

Council will seek to engage with either the entire Council district on Council wide issues (e.g. public consultation on the Annual Business Plan) or with individual community groups in relation to local issues (e.g. in relation to a planned local project or where seeking to understand the views and needs of a local community).

Community Reference Groups will be established across the entire Council District, with relevant information and discussion undertaken with the reference groups as detailed in the Annual Community Engagement Program as set out in clause 3 of this strategy document.

2. LEVELS OF COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

Community engagement is undertaken on four levels dependent on the circumstances, with each having a particular purpose dependent on the circumstances:

(1) Provision of Information

Council provide information to assist community understanding in relation to something which is either about to happen or has already occurred.

(2) Project Consultation

Council undertakes two way discussion designed to obtain feed back on Council initiated projects or proposals to inform final decision making.

(3) Community Involvement / Collaboration

Council initiates forums or meetings designed to help Council identify and understand issues and views from within the various communities to ensure that concerns and aspirations are understood and considered prior to Council decision making.

(4) Community Group Assistance

The Community Development Officer is available to meet with sporting and community groups to assist with the development of proposals for facility upgrades, in particular to assist with the development of funding applications.



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3. ANNUAL COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT PROGRAM

Council will undertake the following as a minimum level of community engagement in relation to specific issues, or to engender co-operation and partnership with stakeholders:-

3.1 Annual Business Plan

- Interactive feed back via Council website;
- A minimum of one hour will be allowed at an ordinary meeting of Council at which members of the public may ask questions and make submissions in relation to the plan

3.2 Strategic Plan

The District Council of Lower Eyre Peninsula Strategic Plan must be reviewed within two years after each general election of Council.

- In any year that the Strategic Management Plan is reviewed the Council will undertake the following minimum level of consultation in relation to the review utilising the following techniques:
 - Interactive feed back via Council website;
 - Meetings with community reference groups;
 - Written submissions from the public will be presented to Council;
 - Persons making written submissions will be invited to speak to their submission at a formal meeting of Council.

3.3 Government Agencies and Authorities

- A minimum of one face to face meeting annually between relevant Council staff and the following government agencies:
 - Regional Development Australia Whyalla and Eyre Peninsula
 - Eyre Peninsula Natural Resource Management Board
 - Eyre Peninsula Local Government Association;
- Regional Development Australia Whyalla & Eyre Peninsula and the Eyre Peninsula Natural Resources Management Board invited to address Council annually in relation to relevant issues;
- Face to face meetings with other government agencies on an as needs basis.

3.4 Council Projects

The following community engagement approach will be taken in relation to significant or unusual capital works projects or where other Council initiatives are proposed to be undertaken in a particular location: -

- A presentation will be made to relevant community reference group/s; and/or
- A public meeting and/or an invitation extended to provide feedback will be issued where the views of the wider local community are being sought.



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3. ANNUAL COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT PROGRAM

cont'd:

3.5 Local Issues

- Annual meetings with community reference groups involving the Mayor, Councillors, Chief Executive Officer and relevant Council staff to be held in March of each year to discuss:
 - On-going and proposed Council capital works programs as part of the Annual Business Plan and Strategic Plan;
 - Council performance in relation to provision of capital works, maintenance and services across the Council network;
 - Planning for the future of our district;
 - Local issues including Council functions and general issues of interest.
 - Other business

- Community Reference Groups to be amalgamated into particular focus groups across the Council district for the purpose of annual Community Reference Group meetings as follows:
 - Community Focus Group 1
 - Coffin Bay Progress Association
 - Marble Range Community & Sports Centre
 - Mt Dutton Bay Progress Association
 - Coult Hall Committee

 - Community Focus Group 2
 - Cummins & District Enterprise Committee
 - Yeelanna Memorial Association
 - Karkoo Hall Committee
 - Mt Hope Hall Committee
 - Kapinnie Hall Committee
 - Youth Advisory Committee
 - Edillilie Memorial Progress Association

 - Community Focus Group 3
 - White Flat Hall Committee
 - Wanilla Progress Association
 - Greenpatch farming community
 - Western Approach area (Coomunga & Surrounds)

 - Community Focus Group 4
 - Tulka Progress Association
 - North Shields Progress Association
 - Boston / Tiatukia Rural Living Area
 - Louth Bay Progress Association
 - Sleaford Bay Progress Association



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3. ANNUAL COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT PROGRAM cont'd:

3.6 Council News

Council news will be distributed amongst the community by the following means:

- Council web site to contain a section related to Council news, including:
 - Snap shot of important decisions taken at each Council meeting;
 - A works department task list including indicative time frames for completion.
- Council to submit a bi-annual focus page report of Council activities in the Port Lincoln Times;
- Important issues and decisions of Council relevant to a particular area to be the subject of a Council article in both the Cummins Connection and Coffin Bay Sun newsletters;
- Provision of Council information to media outlets, including official media releases;
- Regular radio segment;
- Council operated face-book page.

3.7 External Information

Council will on-forward information provided to Council from external organisations (such as Federal or State Government agencies, special interest groups) that may be of interest or benefit to a particular area of the community (i.e. grant opportunities, notifications from an agency of works proposed in an area, consultation opportunities) via letter or email to all relevant community groups, for their consideration and/or action.

3.8 Website

Council will utilise the corporate website to provide the community with information that is timely, accurate and relevant. The latest news section of the website will be used to highlight upcoming events, public notices and a summation of the most recent Council meeting.

Staff will undertake a biennial review of the layout and functionality of the website to ensure that the information contained on the website is presented in the most succinct and user friendly way.

3.9 Social Media

Social media (such as facebook, twitter, applications etc) may be utilised by Council to engage with the community as deemed appropriate. The social media policy (CR-POL-01) ensures appropriate guidelines and procedures are in place to enable staff and the public to responsibly utilise social media platforms.



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4. EVALUATION OF COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT STRATEGY

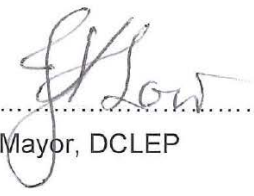
Evaluation of the community engagement process is recognised as being essential towards ensuring that feedback received is given due consideration by Council in its planning and decision making.

In particular Council staff will prepare a summary of meetings which are held with government agencies and authorities as well as with community focus groups as part of the community engagement process. These meeting summaries will be formally presented to and considered by Council as a record to ensure that issues raised are appropriately considered by Council.

SIGNED: 

CEO

Date: 17/11 /2017



Mayor, DCLEP

Date: 17/11/2017