



WARRNAMBOOL  
CITY COUNCIL

# Community Engagement Policy

POLICY TYPE: Warrnambool City Council

APPROVAL DATE: June 2017

REVIEW DATE: June 2020

## DOCUMENT CONTROL

<b>Document Title:</b>	<i>Community Engagement Policy</i>
<b>Policy Type:</b>	<i>Warrnambool City Council</i>
<b>Responsible Branch:</b>	<i>Communications Department</i>
<b>Responsible Officer:</b>	<i>Manager Communications</i>
<b>Document Status:</b>	<i>Final</i>
<b>Adopted By:</b>	<i>Warrnambool City Council</i>
<b>Adopted Date:</b>	<i>5/6/2017</i>
<b>Review Date:</b>	<i>2020</i>

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## 1. INTRODUCTION

### 1.1. Purpose

This policy aims to create stronger links between the council and the community.

This policy provides a consistent framework for community engagement within Warrnambool City Council. This framework is based on the International Association of Public Participation (IAP2) spectrum and will enhance the capacity of the community to engage Council and vice versa.

The purpose of the Policy is to articulate the Council's commitment to thorough, consistent and genuine community engagement that will inform responsible decision making for the benefit of the community.

Council recognises that decision making and service provision are enhanced when the community has an opportunity to provide input and express its expectations, aspirations and ideas.

Council will be informed in its decision making by engaging with a range of stakeholders that comprise the following sectors of the community:

- Residents and ratepayers;
- Representative, interest and lobby groups;
- Community organisations;
- Service clubs;
- Cultural organisations;
- Government; and
- Business.

The purpose of undertaking community engagement is:

- Informing decisions – to provide opportunities for the community to contribute to decision making processes.
- Strengthening relationships – to build new relationships and/or improve relationships with the community
- Building capacity – to educate the community on specific issues to increase knowledge and change behaviours.

The tangible benefits of community engagement can include:

- higher quality solutions;
- more effective use of resources;
- strengthened sense of community;
- conflict management and resolution;
- improved decision-making;
- more cooperative implementation; and,
- greater insight into the community.

## 1.2. Scope

This Policy applies to all Councillors, Council staff, contract workers, consultants and all people who engage with the community on behalf of Warrnambool City Council.

It is acknowledged that there is not a single approach to community engagement and this Policy allows for different approaches in line with the best practice IAP2 Spectrum.

Community engagement will occur via the use of various techniques and approaches to maximise community participation. The techniques or approaches used may vary depending on the circumstances or issue to be addressed or in response to advocacy from the community.

Community engagement must be undertaken when it is required by legislation and when an issue or activity has the potential to affect residents or other stakeholders.

Community engagement should occur when:

- a proposed change could impact on current users or customers of a council service or facility;
- a proposed change could affect the rights or entitlements of community members;
- there is a potential impact on surrounding neighbours;
- when council is setting its strategic direction;
- the council needs to identify and understand community issues, needs and priorities;
- the council needs to monitor customer satisfaction with council services and facilities;
- and,
- there is a level of controversy, conflict or sensitivity about a particular issue.

## 1.3. Definitions

Term	Definition
Community engagement	A process of working with stakeholders and groups of people to develop relationships, build understanding and inform decision making processes.
Council	Warrnambool City Council
Policy	Warrnambool City Council Community Engagement Policy
Community	People who live in, work in or visit Warrnambool
Community group	Groups, organisations and council advisory bodies that have community-based members and who may share a common interest or interests.
Consultation	A two-way relationship with the Council providing information, considering feedback and providing information on an outcome.
Stakeholders	A person, group or system that can affect or be affected by a council action.

## 1.4. References

Legislation	Local Government Act 1989
Guidelines	Community Engagement Guidelines and Toolkit
Warrnambool City Council	Warrnambool City Council Plan 2017-2021
Warrnambool City Council	Pending - Warrnambool 2040 (long-term community vision)

## 2. THE ENGAGEMENT PROCESS

### 2.1 Plain English

All communications will be in plain English, free of jargon. Where it is necessary to use technical terms they will be explained

### 2.2 Core activities and values

The purpose of the following activities and values is to aid in decision-making which reflects the interests and concerns of the community.

- community engagement includes the promise that the public's contribution will be included in the decision-making process;
- community engagement promotes sustainable decisions by recognising and communicating the needs and interests of participants, the broader community and decision-makers;
- community engagement seeks out and facilitates the involvement of those potentially affected by or interested in, a decision;
- community engagement provides people with the information they need to participate in a meaningful way;
- engagement will recognise the diversity within a community including ages, abilities and cultures;
- the Council will report to those involved in an engagement process to complete the information loop from community input to outcome for the community; and,
- people will be informed of community engagement outcomes.

### 2.3 Engagement levels

Council has adopted a participation spectrum developed by the International Association for Public Participation as the recommended guide to engagement activities. The Community Engagement Toolkit provides advice as to an appropriate level of participation (see Further Information and Advice).



International Association  
for Public Participation  
Australasia

## IAP2 Public Participation Spectrum

Developed by the International Association for Public Participation

INCREASING LEVEL OF PUBLIC IMPACT

INFORM	CONSULT	INVOLVE	COLLABORATE	EMPOWER
Public Participation Goal:	Public Participation Goal:	Public Participation Goal:	Public Participation Goal:	Public Participation Goal:
To provide the public with balanced and objective information to assist them in understanding the problems, 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:	Promise to the Public:	Promise to the Public:	Promise to the Public:	Promise to the Public:
We will keep You informed.	We will keep you informed, listen to and acknowledge concerns and provide feedback on how public input influenced the decision.	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 look to you for direct advice and innovation in formulating solutions and incorporate your advice and recommendations into the decisions to the maximum extent possible.	We will implement what you decide.
Example Techniques to Consider:	Example Techniques to Consider:	Example Techniques to Consider:	Example Techniques to Consider:	Example Techniques to Consider:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Fact sheets</li> <li>• Web Sites</li> <li>• Open houses</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Public comment</li> <li>• Focus groups</li> <li>• Surveys</li> <li>• Public meetings</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Workshops</li> <li>• Deliberate polling</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Citizen Advisory</li> <li>• Committees</li> <li>• Consensus building</li> <li>• Participatory decision-making</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Citizen juries</li> <li>• Ballots</li> <li>• Delegated decisions</li> </ul>

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### 3. FURTHER INFORMATION AND ADVICE

To help staff undertake community engagement activities the Community Engagement Guidelines and Toolkit have been developed.

### 4. GOVERNANCE

#### 4.1. Owner

The responsible officer for this policy is the Manager Communications, who is responsible for ensuring this policy is implemented, progress is monitored and is regularly reviewed.

#### 4.2. Review

The Manager Communications will review the policy for any necessary amendments no later than four years after its formulation or after the last review.

#### 4.3. Compliance Responsibility

##### 4.3.1. *Management Executive Group (Chief Executive and Directors)*

- Demonstrate Warrnambool City Council values through being positive role models for this policy.

##### 4.3.2. *Managers and Supervisors*

- Managers and Supervisors are responsible for ensuring employees under their direct control comply with actions detailed in this policy (and related procedures).

##### 4.3.3. *All Employees*

- Demonstrate Warrnambool City Council values through being positive role models for fellow employees, contractors and volunteers by ensuring compliance with this policy (and related procedures).

#### 4.4. Charter of Human Rights Compliance

It is considered that this policy does not impact negatively on any rights identified in the Charter of Human Rights Act (2007).

Warrnambool City Council is committed to consultation and cooperation between management and employees. The Council will formally involve elected employee health and safety representatives in any workplace change that may affect the health and safety of any of its employees.