

Title	Community Engagement Policy
Council Resolution	Item 10 (15 May 2017) as per Council Minutes
Responsible Directorate	Community & Strategy
Due for Review	Three (3) years from Council Resolution Date
Strategic Plan Reference	Making Lives Better: Objective 1.1 - Knowing our communities and what they value. Strategy 1.1.1 - Guide decision making through continued community engagement based on the Community Plan.
ECM	Council Policies

PURPOSE

This policy provides direction for how Glenorchy City Council ('Council') will engage with the community and stakeholders when making decision, delivering services or representing the community.

SCOPE

This policy applies to all Council Aldermen, employees and external consultants who undertake or are expected to undertake community engagement projects or activities as part of their responsibilities.

STATUTORY REQUIREMENTS

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)).

Acts	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Local Government Act 1993</i> • <i>Land Use Planning and Approvals Act 1993</i> • <i>Environmental Management and Pollution Control Act 1994</i> • <i>Public Health Act 1997</i> • <i>Dog Control Act 2000</i>
Regulations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Local Government (General) Regulations 2015</i>
Australian/International Standards	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • IAP2 Quality Assurance Standard 2015 • AS/NZS ISO 9001:2015 Quality Management Systems

DEFINITIONS

Community or Communities	Broadly refers to any specific group of people who share similar location, interest or affiliation with the Glenorchy Local Government Area. These include but are not limited to residents, ratepayers, business owners and operators, workers, students, visitors, including tourists and shoppers, government establishments, community organisations, including clubs, churches and charity groups.
Stakeholder	This refers to a person, group of persons or organisations that have or feel they have an interest or can affect/be affected by an issue or decision.
Community Engagement	Community engagement broadly refers to a planned process whereby Council and the community exchange information through different methods and take actions to solve common problems or make decisions. This process exists on a spectrum from <i>inform, consult, involve, collaborate, to empower</i> , as defined by the International Association for Public Participation (IAP2).
IAP2	International Association for Public Participation

POLICY STATEMENT

1. Glenorchy City Council is committed to engaging with its communities on issues that affect them.
2. Council's Community Engagement Framework will guide the delivery of community engagement projects and activities.
3. We will take into account the opinions, ideas and feedback of our community when making decisions or delivering services.
4. We will engage with our communities when in the opinion of Council officers or the elected Council:
 - i. the views of individuals or groups within our community will provide further information valuable to the planning, solution or decision
 - ii. the issue will significantly affect existing levels of service
 - iii. the issue is complex or controversial
 - iv. the issue will have long term impact on the community, or when
 - v. it is a legislative requirement.
5. There may be circumstances under which community engagement is impracticable, such as where emergency response is required, or a statutory process may be compromised.
6. 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.
7. As much as possible, appropriate level of resourcing will be committed to community engagement.
8. Council officers whose position description involves delivering projects, programs and activities directly with the community will be required to undergo community engagement training as part of their induction and ongoing support provided on the job as needed.
9. Council's community engagement framework shall be guided by the International Association for Public Participation (IAP2) Core Values and Public Participation Spectrum.
10. Council shall maintain a register of community engagement activities for the purpose of planning and reporting.

GUIDING PRINCIPLES

The following eight (8) principles are to guide Council's community engagement processes:

- Inclusiveness – We will engage broadly and ensure participants are representative of the concerned communities and stakeholders.
- Timeliness – We will engage early or as soon as practicable in the process and allow sufficient time for the community and stakeholders to participate in the process.
- Partnership – We will seek to build relationships and promote mutual understanding. We will discourage activities that risk dividing the community into conflict or opposing extremes.
- Respect – We will listen to and value the ideas, feelings and opinions expressed. While we cannot satisfy all views expressed, we will take them into account.
- Access to Information – We will provide information to participants to help them form sound opinions and judgements. We will promote the use of plain English in community engagement.
- Transparency – We will be honest and open-minded, and not seek pre-determined outcomes. As stakeholders too, we will communicate our views and consider expert opinions where available.
- Responsiveness – We will acknowledge feedback, provide updates and inform participants of the outcome of the process.
- Continuous Improvement – We will evaluate and take measures to improve the process. We will endeavour to ensure adequate resourcing is available for better ways and means to engage.

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT FRAMEWORK

This Policy is part of a broader Community Engagement Framework developed by Council to progress a culture of meaningful engagement with the communities and stakeholders in the City of Glenorchy. The Community Engagement Framework includes the following four (4) components:

- This *Community Engagement Policy* – this provides direction and outlines the guiding principles for community engagement
- A *Community Engagement Procedure* – this guides Council staff on when and how they should engage with the community and stakeholders under different circumstances (internal document)
- A *Community Engagement Toolkit* – this include staff guidelines and resources on how and when they should use different methods in delivering community engagement activities (internal document), and
- A *Public Participation Brochure* – this contains information for the public on Council’s community engagement processes and how they can get involved.

PRIVACY IN COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

Council is committed to protecting the personal information of all participants of its community engagement process. In demonstrating this commitment, Council will be guided by the Personal Information Protection Principles listed in Schedule 1 of the *Personal Information Protection Act 2004*.

Personal information collected in public meetings or any engagement activity will only be used for the purpose of ongoing engagement on the issue by Council. Such information will not be made available to the public.

All submissions received as part of a community engagement process will be considered as available for public inspection in its entirety if so requested or necessary, unless confidentiality is requested by the person making the submission.

REPORTING REQUIREMENT

Proposals submitted to Council on policies, programs, projects and activities are to include a section on Community Engagement. If community engagement is required as part of the decision making on the proposal, an Engagement Plan is to be included in the proposal.

Reports submitted to Council on policies, programs, projects and activities where community engagement has taken place as part of the decision-making process is to include information on the engagement process and output.

BACKGROUND

Council is committed to working with its local communities and stakeholders to understand the needs and aspirations of our communities. This has been demonstrated in various ways including the processes and outcomes of the City of Glenorchy Community Plan 2015 – 2040. Council is faced with increased community expectations to deliver improved outcomes for our communities whose problems are also increasingly complex and varying. Council recognises that solving these problems will require working with all those who have an interest or are affected in order to ensure effective and efficient solutions. Therefore, Council has developed a Community Engagement Policy to guide its practice of community engagement, improve public participation in decision making and service delivery.