



Policy Title: COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT POLICY

Policy Type: STATUTORY
 (Statutory, Financial, Administrative, Human Resources)

Policy Number: S004

Approved by Council	Last Review	Current Review	Next Review
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Approved by CEO/Director:	Bernie McCarthy – CEO	 Signature.	
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Implementation Department		Officer Position	
Chief Executives Office		Chief Executive Officer	
Revision Number:	Document Management File #		
6.0	01-03-S004		

1. Policy Background/Scope

The Local Government Principles cited in the *Local Government Act 2009*, requires a council to practice democratic representation, social inclusion and meaningful community engagement.

This policy applies to all of Council's operations including council's strategic planning and our day to day business activities.

It establishes the principles that are the basis of Council's engagement activities, the role of councillors and staff in engaging with the community, and the mechanisms which council will use to engage the community.

1.1 Community Engagement

Ongoing communication with our community to understand their concerns and aspirations so that decisions are well informed and representative of the community's views.

Community engagement is essential to ensure that Council is aware of all community concerns and is representative of all Aurukun residents. Council wants to improve these processes and provide all residents with the opportunity to express their voice and provide input into the future of Aurukun.

2. Policy Provisions

As detailed in Council's Corporate Plan, Key Governance Goals 1 and 2. Councils Leadership Role and Better Communication, Council will represent community interests through a process of active consultation with community members.

2.1 Engagement Principles

Council has decided to take a principle-based approach to its community engagement activities. Each principle seeks to clarify the purpose of why Council engages with the community and guide how that engagement occurs.

- *We are Fair Dinkum:* council will engage with its community in ways that are timely, cost effective, open to all, easily understood and not overly bureaucratic or resource intensive.
- *We will let you know what is going on:* the community has the right to be well informed on issues and receive feedback from council on how its input has been used to inform council decisions.
- *We are all equal:* council's goal is one of inclusive involvement. All voices matter, all opinions are valued and considered.
- *We want to learn and to do things better:* council is committed to the development of innovative engagement approaches, learning from each engagement experience, and using such learning to improve our approaches to engagement.

2.2 Engagement Activities

A feature of the Aurukun Community is that due to the closeness of Councillors and staff to the community that Council is generally very well informed on the views of the community. In light of this the community has an expectation that Council will make informed decisions based on their local knowledge without constant reference to resource hungry and repetitive engagement activities.

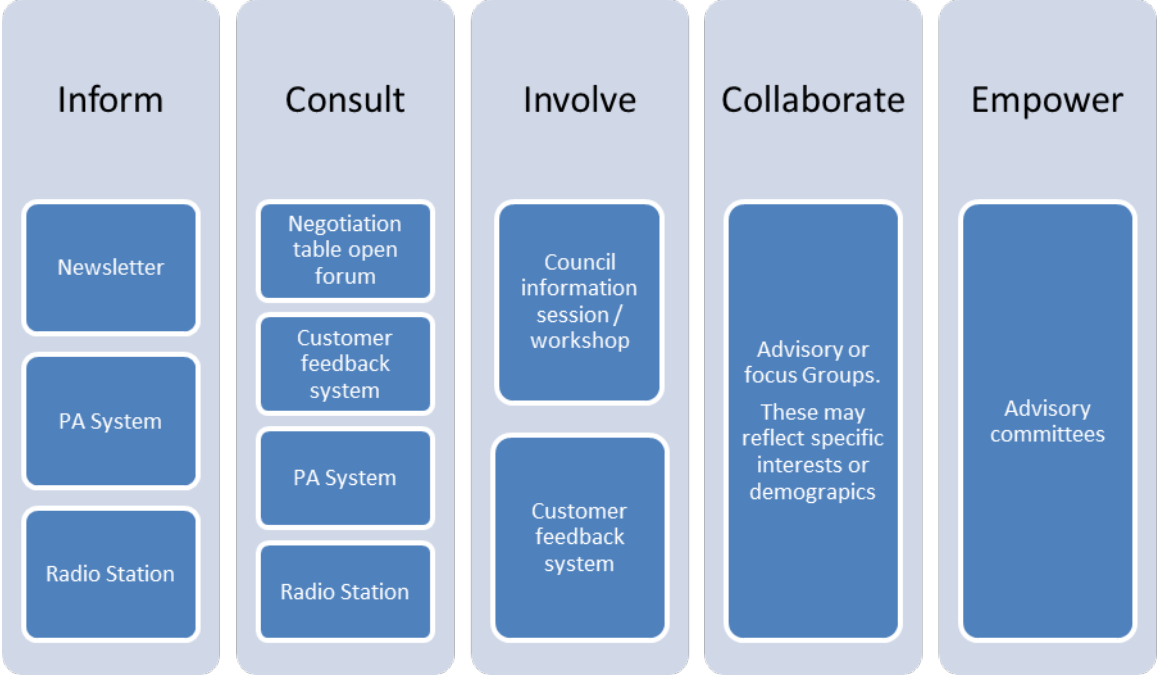
The need for, and type of community engagement to be undertaken will be determined at the project planning stage following an analysis of the desired project outcomes. The project plan will also identify the most appropriate communication tool to ensure that the particular target group(s) are well informed of both the issue and related engagement opportunities.

Council will also consider whether it can obtain the community information it requires from another source, or previous engagement activity in order to maximise the use of limited resources and minimise the likelihood of consultation fatigue developing within the community.

Where the subject of the engagement is considered by the project team to be complex in nature and beyond the general knowledge or understanding of the target group(s) it will include an appropriate knowledge development element in the project plan which will as far as is practicable ensure that the target group(s) is well informed and the engagement is meaningful.

In instances where engagement activities are required, Council recognises the engagement activities advocated by the International Association of Public Participation (IAP2) as detailed in Appendix A.

Council has identified several community engagement techniques that it considers appropriate for Aurukun. Based on an assessment of IAP2 these activities should be used as appropriate.



2.3 Explanation of terms

- *Newsletter* - Periodic community newsletter “Wik Kath” distributed to all households.
- *Negotiation Table open forum* – Regular open forum held during Negotiation Table meetings held in the community.
- *Customer feedback system* - Formal process for managing suggestions, complaints, and other feedback.
- *PA system* – Regular community forum in different locations for community announcements and to record public comment.
- *Radio station* (when operational) – Advertising and interviews on the local community radio station.
- *Council information session* - Information sessions and workshops held to engage the community on specific topics.
- Community Email network.
- Regular Media Releases.
- Display Posters in Business precinct, Store, Council offices, Clinic and Library/IKC noticeboards.
- ASC Facebook page and Website.

2.4 Developing Engagement Capacity

In order to develop a culture of engagement across the organisation Council will:

- Modify its report format to include a section titled ‘community engagement’ which details the proposed engagement strategy to be undertaken within the context of the report.
- Establish performance indicators to measure engagement outcomes.
- Identify new and emerging information, communication, and knowledge management technologies and explore how they could be used to better engage the community.

2.5 Community Engagement Register

Council will establish a community engagement register to record its engagement activities.

This will assist in developing a system of governance that mitigates the risks of duplication and over consultation, records activities undertaken, and allows the community to see at any time what consultation is being planned or is occurring.

The register will also contain a record of the membership and the minutes of all council taskforces and advisory panels.

Establishment of the community engagement register will assist Council meet its reporting obligations to State Government.

2.6 Review

Council will formally review this community engagement policy after two years of operation.

3. Related Documentation

Queensland Local Government Act 2009

Local Government Regulation 2012

Queensland Sustainable Planning Act 2009

Appendix A

Supporting Documents

AURUKUN SHIRE COUNCIL CORPORATE PLAN 2014 -2019

KEY GOVERNANCE GOAL 1 OUR LEADERSHIP ROLE FOR THE OUR COMMUNITY

KEY GOVERNANCE GOAL 2 BETTER COMMUNICATION

This Corporate Plan becomes the focus for all future planning in our town.

GOAL

Council takes a stronger leadership role in the community

Council sets the agenda

Consistent messages are provided about Aurukun

Establishing the role of town spokesman

Improve internal communication within the town

Improving communication with external agencies and media

FOCUS

- All government agencies and other organisations undertaking program work in Aurukun focus on the key goals in this corporate plan
- Council facilitates regular meetings of all stakeholders in the community to provide direction and ensure consistency in program delivery
- Each year the council identifies the top three or four priorities based on its community needs and communicates those priorities to all stakeholders
- Proactive messages about Aurukun are provided to external agencies on a regular basis via newsletters, minutes and meetings
- Establishing a protocol to ensure that there is one spokesperson for the town with the mayor undertaking that role
- Keeping the community informed about what is happening in our town
 - Undertaking regular town meetings so residents can speak on issues affecting the community
 - Providing regular newsletters to stakeholders about Aurukun
 - Promoting Aurukun and its council by accessing mainstream media to improve the image of Aurukun

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 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 issues and concerns 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 issues 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 Tools:	Example Tools:	Example Tools:	Example Tools:	Example Tools:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Fact sheets ● Web Sites ● Open houses 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Public comment ● Focus groups ● Surveys ● Public meetings 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Workshops ● Deliberate polling 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Citizen Advisory Committees ● Consensus-building ● Participatory decision-making 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Citizen juries ● Ballots ● Delegated decisions

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