



Community Engagement Framework

2013-2018



Contents

Shaping Positive Change	4
The Community's Vision	5
Consistent Approach	6
Defining Community Engagement	7
Level of Community Involvement	8
Inform	10
Consult	3
Involve	14
Collaborate	17
Empower	18
Assess Level of Impact	20
Considering Risk	21
Managing Risk	21
Process for Developing the Framework	22
Engagement Toolbox	23
Engagement Process	24
Forward Consultation Program template	24
Engagement Brief template	25
Engagement Proposal template	27
IAP2 Spectrum	28
Engagement examples	29
Community Engagement	29
Stakeholder Engagement	29
Community meeting checklist/ considerations	30
Community meeting agenda	31
Table of Engagement Techniques	32
Evaluation matrix template	35

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Framework owner Director City Engagement

Prepared by Customer Service, Communication and Consultation Services
Version 1

Amendments The framework replaces and supersedes the Communication and Consultation Framework 2008-2012

Shaping Positive Change

It is the intent of The City of Newcastle to engage with the community, using effective engagement practices, on major issues and plans affecting the future of the city and activities that have significant impact on the community.

The process of setting priorities for government action and allocating government resources is informed by good community engagement.

The Community Engagement Framework is a valuable tool for those at The City of Newcastle who have an interest in and responsibility for coordinating, planning, designing and implementing community engagement activities. It provides a method for the selection of the level of engagement that most closely aligns to Council and community expectations.

The framework shapes positive change focused on the city and community priorities, developed through broad and representative community participation. It helps improve the experience of all participants involved in community engagement to achieve the highest quality of process and results.

The Community Engagement Framework is underpinned by the City Engagement Charter (2012). The charter provides a set of guiding principles to assist Council in all community engagement activities. These principles are:

- be accessible and inclusive;
- actively seek input into our decision making;
- be open and transparent.

The framework supports and builds on the Community Engagement Policy (2013) and reflects The City of Newcastle's priorities and direction in community engagement.

Beyond Statutory Requirements The NSW Local Government Act 1993 states that a Council has the following Charter:

“Members of the public may influence council decisions concerning matters such as the levels of rates and charges, the terms of community strategic plans, delivery programs and operational plans, the granting of development consents, etc by participating in council community engagement activities including by making submissions to the council and comments on or objections to proposals relating to those matters.”

Council recognises the value to be gained by seeking to engage with the community beyond the statutory requirements.



The Community's Vision

The Newcastle 2030 Community Strategic Plan (CSP) is the aspirational, shared vision for Newcastle, identifying 23 strategic objectives. The following objectives pertain to community conversations and Council's decision-making processes:

- active citizen engagement in local planning and decision-making processes and a shared responsibility for achieving our goals;
- considered decision-making based on collaborative, transparent and accountable leadership;
- integrated, sustainable, long-term planning for Newcastle and the region;
- a welcoming community that cares and looks after each other – where diversity is embraced, everyone is valued and has the opportunity to contribute and belong;
- active and healthy communities with physical, mental and spiritual wellbeing.

The guiding principles of the Newcastle 2030 Community Strategic Plan recognise the importance of social justice and local democracy:

- everyone should have a fair opportunity to participate in the future of the community;
- everyone should have the maximum opportunity to genuinely participate in decisions affecting their lives;

- people should have access to the information they need to understand government planning and decision-making in order to participate in an informed way;
- individuals and groups are encouraged to take a role in the community and are empowered with the skills, support and the opportunity to shape and influence the decisions that affect our community now and in the future.

The delivery of the Newcastle 2030 Community Strategic Plan requires the engagement and advocacy of community partners, from residents to industry stakeholders, government and community agencies.

By genuinely undertaking community engagement, the community has an opportunity to shape and influence the development and delivery of quality Council facilities and services which meet community needs and aspirations, ultimately contributing to the realisation of a better city.

“Both literature and other research identify a trend towards people wanting to have more say in decisions which affect their communities,” Australian Centre of Excellence for Local Government (ACELG).



Defining Community Engagement

The City of Newcastle has defined community engagement as:

An important process of fostering relationships between Council and the community, whereby Council shares information, consults, involves, collaborates, and actively enhances community capability to influence and shape the planning and delivery of services and Council decisions. It is not a single activity but a way of building a stronger understanding of the community in Newcastle.

“Community ‘consultation’ is increasingly being redefined as ‘engagement’ – Councils going well beyond seeking views on specific decisions to having an ongoing dialogue with their constituents about service delivery and the key issues facing the area,” The Australian Center for Excellence for Local Government (ACELG).

Community engagement is the overall umbrella encompassing all public participation activities undertaken by The City of Newcastle.

Engagement does not replace the term ‘consultation.’ Rather engagement identifies consultation as only one form of engagement activity, along with inform, involve, collaborate and empower, that assist to clarify community expectations and their role in the decision-making process. It is important that the appropriate terminology is used to identify the type of engagement activity undertaken by Council. This will help to reduce confusion and clarify the purpose of the activity.

Community engagement encompasses a spectrum of activities, ranging from everyday informal discussions, contact with stakeholders during service delivery, group discussions or meetings, formal consultation processes, through to Council supporting community members in taking action on issues themselves.



Consistent Approach

By offering a common understanding and consistent approach to the community engagement process, the Community Engagement Framework enables Council to be better able to undertake community engagement as part of an integrated service delivery. The framework provides a clear definition of community engagement and sets specific standards to assist in planning and conducting effective community participation processes. It assists to develop and maintain an organisational culture that respects and values community engagement.

The City of Newcastle acknowledges the importance of building relationships with the community and embraces ongoing dialogue to improve decision making processes through timely, transparent, honest, inclusive, accessible and responsive community participation. Receiving diverse perspectives and potential solutions enables Council to make more informed decisions. It does not replace the decision-making functions of the elected Council but informs it. Furthermore, it is not always practical or appropriate to engage the community on all Council decisions.

It is crucial that community members are sufficiently informed of major issues, plans, projects and all matters likely to affect them and have opportunities to participate meaningfully in community engagement to enhance Council’s decision-making process. This will thereby reduce potential misinformation and miscommunication.

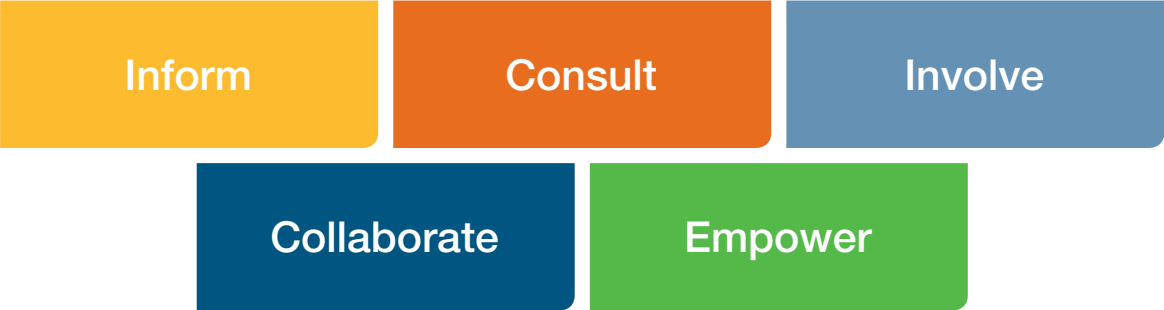
Level of Community Involvement

Community participation refers to the level or degree to which the community is involved in planning and decision making.

The City of Newcastle recognises and abides by best practice principles developed by the International Association for Public Participation (IAP2). IAP2 was founded in 1990 as the International Association of Public Participation Practitioners (IAP3) to promote the values and best practices associated with involving the public in the government and industry decision making process.



Considered a world-renowned model, the IAP2 Public Participation Spectrum is a useful tool to help identify and select the appropriate level of public participation, select methods of engagement, and identify a range of tools. The model is values based, decision-oriented and goal-driven.



The Framework does not prescribe exactly how the community should be engaged for every project or issue. This would be extremely difficult given the range of Council initiatives and activities. Rather, Council staff determine the most appropriate engagement approach, deciding on the level of community participation based on the nature of the issue, project, plan or decision to be made. Ideally all projects sufficiently complex to require a project plan should consider engagement activities.

Moving to the right of the spectrum corresponds to an increase in expectation for public participation and impact. IAP2’s Public Participation Spectrum has five levels of participation, describing the goal and promise for each.

In many cases, more than one level of participation and technique will be required to achieve Council’s engagement objectives (eg Inform and Consult). Movement between engagement activities may occur as the Engagement Proposal is implemented and/or before the Council makes a final decision. Refer to the Engagement Toolbox (page 23) for the table of engagement tools and techniques.

Increasing the level of public impact ➔
 Level of community influence over decisions ➔

	Inform	Consult	Involve	Collaborate	Empower
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 and/or devolved budgets in the hands of the public.
Promise	We will keep you informed.	We will keep you informed, listen to 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.

Inform

The elected Council and the administration have an important role in establishing an environment where effective communication can happen. Communicating helps various stakeholders, including the administration, Councillors and the community, to share, understand and support the end result or decisions that guide the delivery of services across the city.

While informing the community does not involve community participation per se, it informs the various parties about the purpose or issues and may also be used at the conclusion of the consultation or other participatory activity, to impart feedback. The information on decisions made assist the community in understanding the situation, the solution being implemented and the potential impacts.

Issues of major community significance, that are also identified as posing a high risk to safety, will be clearly communicated so that the community can be informed on the issues at hand and Council's response. However community consultation in such matters would not be required as this would provide an expectation that the community would be able to provide feedback on an operational issue.

In this area of the spectrum, Council is sharing information with the community through awareness campaigns, information/ education campaigns and feedback mechanisms to communicate public comments.



The provision of one-way communication, where Council provides balanced and objective information. This can also include educating or advising the community on Council services, facilities, issues and activities to enable the community to actively engage in Council's decision making processes. Often the community is informed about a decision that has been made and the relevant action/ activities scheduled to take place.



Consult

Effective decision making relies on input from a range of sources including the community, professional advisors and others. In this area of the spectrum, Council asks and listens to the community.

Consultation should not be restricted to controversial or wide-ranging matters. The following project categories should have a consultative component:

- directly and significantly affect a large number of people;
- involve significant numbers of people who hold strong views on the subject of the project or plan;
- affect the rights or entitlements of local citizens and/or affect the physical, psychological and social well-being of people within the local government's area;
- Council policy development or improvement and implementation;

- Council service/program development or improvement, planning and implementation;
- Council strategic plan development or improvement and implementation;
- local/neighbourhood improvement or stakeholder specific matter;
- major project, strategic issue, or resource plan that impact on the finances or future of the whole local government area;
- notification of legislative requirement;
- site specific matter or event.

Council obtains feedback from the community regarding views, solutions, alternatives and proposals to inform and influence the outcome of Council decisions and actions.

Recognised as Best Practice

The City of Newcastle was endorsed by the Local Government Shire Association (LGSA) of NSW in 2010 when Council's commitment to meaningful community engagement was recognised with the LGSA's RH Dougherty Awards in the category of Excellence in Communication. The award recognises the innovative way Council has embedded community consultation into Council operations using Newcastle Voice.



"There is a growing interest in long running and creative forms of participation that go beyond single, issue-specific consultations. Well known examples include the Newcastle Voice panel which has members representing businesses, community organisations and residents," The Australian Center for Excellence for Local Government (ACELG).

Involve

In this area of the spectrum, Council makes use of local knowledge and expertise in planning and implementation. The community may also be asked how they would like Council to proceed before a final decision is made.

Meaningful community engagement in this area of the spectrum ensures that:

- services are better tailored to local needs;
- changes are long lasting and sustainable;
- resources are effectively targeted and applied, and;
- the community takes greater responsibility for what is happening in their area.

Participatory process to identify community concerns, aspirations and issues and ensure they are considered prior to decision making.





Collaborate

In this area of the spectrum, networks, government agencies, organisations, businesses, key stakeholders and community members work together to find solutions, taking into account all the information that leads to an agreed outcome. Collaboration requires significant time, energy and resources from all parties involved.

Council works together with the community to identify preferred solutions and alternatives, once issues and interests are well understood.



Empower

Community members in this area of the spectrum are empowered to become more involved in building their own future to foster and sustain positive change. For the most part, it sits at an operational level rather than a decision-making level.

Residents, visitors, property owners, businesses, Council and other agencies working in partnership, are provided with the skills, information, authority and resources to deliberate on projects and issues, presenting recommendations, or make part or final decisions.

It's about supporting the community by bringing people together to build community capacity through action.

In local government the elected Council is responsible for making policy, strategic and budget decisions. As such, empower has limited application and refers to community development and community capacity building initiatives whereby Council provides opportunities and resources for communities to contribute their skills and talents.



Assess Level of Impact



The level of community input is directly related to the nature, complexity and the expected level of impact on the community due to the issue, plan or project. Not all issues require public participation. The community will become involved according to its perception of the seriousness of the issue. Similarly, it is important to gauge the receptiveness of the organisation to community feedback and the resource level that will be available.

It may be necessary to re-evaluate the level of impact and vary the engagement activities and level of public participation due to a misalignment or change in the situation.

The Framework recognises that Council staff have the capacity to judge the potential impact and expectations regarding a situation or project and the appropriate level of community participation. Consideration will need to be given to the following:

- the issue;
- availability of resources;
- background information, including Council Reports, Council Briefing papers;
- degree of complexity of the issue or project;
- degree of participation the community appears to want;
- degree to which the community can influence the decision-making process;
- emergency situation or safety concern;

- extent community could help improve the solution or outcome;
- historical context/ whether there has been previous engagement activities on the same issue;
- legislative and regulatory requirements;
- level of difficulty in addressing the problem or opportunity;
- level of interest from the community, as perceived by The City of Newcastle;
- level of potential impacts to the public;
- media interest;
- the choices and options available;
- the objectives of the exercise;
- whether a decision has already been made or not.

The impact can be economic, social and/or can have an environmental well-being on the area. There are three levels of impact:

- **Low** - Small change or improvement to a facility or service at the local level. Little effect on the community. Low or no risk of controversy.
- **Moderate** - Loss of or significant change to a facility or service at the local level or less significant impact across all the Newcastle LGA. Potential for controversy.
- **High** - Significant change that is considered of high value across all the Newcastle LGA or a large part of the city. High controversial issue or project.

Considering Risk

It is important to identify and consider the risks associated with the engagement, especially those that may have a negative impact.

Risks could include:

- community groups or stakeholders feeling excluded from the engagement process;
- community members having different expectations of the community meetings;
- consultation fatigue/ low community participation/ poor attendance;
- financial—from budget blowout or cancellation costs;
- high controversy of some proposals/ degree of political sensitivity;
- high interest by special interest groups;
- inadequate security;
- larger than expect attendance;
- late arrival or non-arrival of facilitator or speakers;
- logistical or technical issues;
- negative media coverage or high media interest;
- proposals are considered to have significant impact across a large part of the city;
- receiving high level of heated emails from community members;
- there may be a high number of derailers and potential for community outrage and resentment.

Managing Risk

It is important that risks continue to be monitored, assessed and managed once the engagement activity has started. Plans should be put in place to reduce the likelihood and or impact of the potential risk.

Part of planning for community engagement involves completing an Engagement Brief and creating an Engagement Proposal to ensure the engagement techniques selected support engagement objectives and ultimately the decision making process. This will also allow for a shared and collaborative understanding and approach across relevant disciplines and departments within Council.

Refer to the Toolkit for the Engagement Brief and Engagement Proposal template.

A Communication Activity Brief and Action Plan may also need to be developed and integrated as part of the planning process to ensure effective engagement, communication and project management.

A communication plan starts by addressing the following:

- why do you need to communicate?
(purpose of communication)
- who do you need to communicate with?
(target audience/s)
- what is your message?
(what you need to say or what is the 'call to action')
- how will you communicate?
(Communication methods and tools)

It is imperative that sufficient time be allocated to promoting the engagement and encourage participation.

When communicating with the community, it is important to:

- be clear, concise and use plain language, without jargon;
- be open and honest about the planned activities;
- understand your target audience and ensure the message is appropriately targeted them;
- share the key message(s) with other staff who may be engaging with the same community members or stakeholders. Consistency is key;
- not overpromise;
- address community concerns;
- verify the accuracy of the key message(s) with other staff across Council.

Likewise, the Place Making Principles and Toolkit may need to be considered.

Process for Developing the Framework

The Community Engagement Framework is built on a variety of research, experience and best practice. Embarking on the development of the framework comprised of listening and involving a multitude of community members and key stakeholders.

It included the International Association for Public Participation (IAP2)'s Planning for Effective Public Participation (2006). It also included national government policy and legislation considerations, including the Local Government and Community Engagement in Australia's Working Paper No. 5 (2011) and the Community Engagement Handbook – A model framework for leading practice in local government in South Australia (2008).



Engagement Toolbox



Engagement Process

1. Public participation need identified

1.0 Service unit identifies need for public participation.
Initial discussion with community consultation team.
Add project to the Consultation Forward Program. Monthly report to the Executive Leadership Team of all forward public participation activities.
Status – Tentative.

2. Agree and approve Engagement Brief & Engagement Proposal

2.1 Agree on scope of works between Consultation Services (deliverables) and Service Unit (provides the context), agree on all engagement activity components and develop engagement tools (design).
Status – Confirmed.

2.2 Service Unit Manager despatches to Director for approval. Director to identify linkages to other strategic projects, where appropriate. Director’s discretion for GM involvement. All public participation must obtain Director approval from the client’s organisational group, as well as Director approval from City Engagement.
Status – Approved.

3. Engagement activity runs

Survey in the field, qualitative research (focus groups,

interviews, workshops) promoted and run, submissions are logged. **Note:** When the consultation is running, no changes are to be made to the survey to keep the integrity of the survey. If a change is deemed necessary, a risk assessment will be created and written approval will be obtained by the Directors. Status – In Progress.

4. Analysis and reporting

Compilation and analysis of results. Draft report is provided to the Project Lead. Final report provided to the Service Unit Manager. Status – In Progress.

5. Feedback to public

Community Consultation Coordinator , the Director of Engagement and the Director from the organisational group will meet to discuss when and who will receive the findings. Media, Council website, summary report formats, presentations as needed.
Status – Complete.

6. Client evaluation

6.1 Community Consultation Coordinator sends an evaluation matrix to the Project Lead. The matrix measures satisfaction on five attributes: effective, flexible, fair, professional, quality.

6.2 Meeting with internal client’s larger team or Council to discuss outcomes.

Forward Consultation Program template

Subject/Project	External Consultant	Group	Service Unit	Responsible	Importance	Type	Start Date	Status	Audience
Date by month									
Internal									
					Operational, Service unit, Strategic			Tentative, Approved, In progress, Completed	
External									

Engagement Brief template

Document Date	Version	Prepared By

Project Name		Project Name	
Project Manager		Project Name	
ECM Number			
Project Description	What are you doing?		
Project Background	What is the background of the project		
Project Aim			
Stakeholders (internal and external)	Why are you doing it and which council strategic objective is it aligned with? Where a Project Charter exists, copy the aim here.		
Perceived level of impact	<input type="checkbox"/> Low Small change to a facility or service. Little effect on the community. Low or no risk of controversy.	<input type="checkbox"/> Moderate Loss of or significant change to a facility or service. Potential for controversy	<input type="checkbox"/> High Significant change that is considered of high value. Highly controversial issue or project.

Engagement Level				
What do you want to do?	Click to select	Level of impact		
Provide balanced and objective information to the community or stakeholders to assist understanding of topic, alternatives, opportunities and/or solutions.	<input type="checkbox"/> Inform Complete section A	Increasing level of public impact	Lower level of impact: Small change or improvement to a facility or service at the local level. Little effect on the community. Low or no risk of controversy. (i.e. upgrade to local playground)	Moderate level of impact: Loss of or significant change to a facility or service at the local level or less significant impact across all the Newcastle LGA. Potential for controversy. (i.e. removal of local playground, changes to services, provisions to a community-wide event)
Obtain public feedback on analysis, alternatives and/or decisions.	<input type="checkbox"/> Consult Complete section B			High level of impact: Significant change that is considered of high value across all the Newcastle LGA or a large part of the city. High controversial issue or project. (i.e. provision of a district or regional facility, changes to natural environment, removal of a facility or service)
Work with the public throughout the process to ensure that concerns and aspirations are consistently understood and considered	<input type="checkbox"/> Involve Complete section B			
Work with the public throughout the process to ensure that concerns and aspirations are consistently understood and considered	<input type="checkbox"/> Collaborate Complete section B			
To place final decision-making and/or devolved budgets in the hands of the public.	<input type="checkbox"/> Empower Complete section B			

Engagement Brief template (page two)

SECTION A- Complete if Engagement Level is INFORM			
Budget and job number			
Key Messages		<div>What are the key points / messages you want to get across?</div> <div>Note: Think of it like this, if you were on the radio and had to sell your project in five sentences, what would they be?</div> <div>1.</div> <div>2.</div> <div>3.</div> <div>4.</div> <div>5.</div>	
Project Delivery		Timing	Responsibility
Use the project plan deliverables and milestones. Do not list proposed communication activities			

SECTION B- Complete if Engagement Level is CONSULT, INVOLVE OR COLLABORATE			
Budget and job number			
Key issues			
Target Sample			
(who do you want to talk to?)			
Future opportunities			
(further opportunities for stakeholders to have a say?)			
Preferred report type		<div><input type="checkbox"/> 1-page summary</div> <div><input type="checkbox"/> 4-8 page summary</div> <div><input type="checkbox"/> Transcript from face-to-face activity</div> <div><input type="checkbox"/> Comprehensive report- Word version or</div> <div><input type="checkbox"/> Comprehensive report- Powerpoint version</div>	
Document Date	Version	Signature	Date
Project Manager			
Service Unit Manager			

Please forward this completed document to the Communications Manager or Community Consultation Coordinator

Engagement Proposal template

Document Date	Version	Prepared By	

Project Name			
Project Manager			
ECM Number			
Engagement objectives			
Engagement tools	<div><input type="checkbox"/> Information session or public meeting</div> <div><input type="checkbox"/> Focus group session(s) 8-12 people</div> <div><input type="checkbox"/> Workshop session(s)</div> <div><input type="checkbox"/> Quick Poll (1-page summary report only)</div> <div><input type="checkbox"/> Survey</div>		
Key dates	<div>Agree consultation plan:</div> <div>Consultation runs:</div> <div>Analysis and reporting:</div> <div>Distribution :</div>		
Cost and resources	<div>* If promotion of activity or education is required, a Communication Plan must be completed which will detail how to reach and inform potentially affected people, and promote the benefits of participation</div>		
Distribution	<div>* Reporting feedback on outcomes to stakeholders will require a Communication Plan to be completed which will highlight how community input was taken into account and detail the implementation of the decision.</div>		

Document Date	Name	Signature	Date
Project Manager			
Service Unit Manager			
Director			
Director City Engagement			

Please forward this completed document to the Communications Manager or Community Consultation Coordinator

Increasing the level of public impact

Level of community influence over decisions

	Inform	Consult	Involve	Collaborate	Empower
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 and/or devolved budgets in the hands of the public.
Promise	We will keep you informed.	We will keep you informed, listen to 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	<ul style="list-style-type: none">AdvertisementCommunity noticeboardsCommunity eventCommunity reference panel; Newcastle VoiceCouncil websiteFact sheet/pamphletInformation session/ displayLetter/flyerLord Mayor's columnMedia release/ alert/ conferenceNewsletterOpen house/ City ExpoRadioReportSignage/posterSocial media (Facebook)StaffStakeholder briefingSymposiaTelephone hotlineTelevision	<ul style="list-style-type: none">BriefingComment/ feedback formCommunity reference panel; Newcastle VoiceDrop-in sessionFocus group sessionForumInterviewOnline discussionOpen spacePublic exhibition/ call for submissionPublic meetingPublic VoiceQuick pollSurveyWard ForumWorkshop sessionWorld Café	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Community reference panel; Newcastle VoiceFocus group sessionPersonal briefingStakeholder meetingTours/ field tripVolunteeringWorkshop	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Business Improvement AssociationCommunity Consultative GroupDeliberative forum/ pollingReference Groups355 CommitteeStrategic Advisory CommitteeCoastal Reserve TrustSteering CommitteeWorking Party	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Citizen juryCapacity building initiatives; Community Development PracticeCommunity Assistance ProgramElected CouncillorsThe Loft youth programsPlace MakingPride of Place GrantYouth Council

Community Engagement

Face to face

- Information session
- Community meeting
- Community workshop
- Open house (City Expo)
- Focus group
- Intercept survey
- Drop-in session
- Interview
- Tour/field trip

Online

- Online survey
- Quick polls
- Facebook
- Council's website
- Online discussion (discontinued)
- Survey via mobile capability

Print

- Mail survey
- Newsletter
- Advertising
- Flyer, brochure, poster
- Council News
- Static display
- Rate insert

Stakeholder Engagement

Face to face

- Stakeholder workshop session
- Focus group
- Information session
- 1:1 interview

Online

- Online survey
- Council's website

Print

- Mail survey
- Letter
- Flyer, brochure, poster

Community meeting checklist/ considerations

Public Meeting Logistics		
General logistics before the event		Arrange for slide projector, screen
		Arrange for sound system
		Check corporate diary and add meeting reminder
		Complete a risk assessment and forward to insurance section (2 weeks prior)
		Confirm date and book Lord Mayor and General Manager ASAP
		Contact insurance section
		Contracts with service providers
		Do a site recon to determine suitability
		Do we need outdoor entertainment
		First Aid
		Is a photographer required?
		Is a power source required?
		Lectern and background
		NCC banners
		Off-site to minimise disruption
		Organise refreshments
		People sit around a table, space for a flip chart and one to two facilitators
		Prepare agenda/feedback sheets
		Prepare handouts/programs
		Prepare nametags or name cards
		Prepare overheads, slides or videos
		Prepare sign-in or registration sheet
		Produce displays (posters, maps)
		Reserve an appropriate room, considering size, access, comfort, lighting
		Security
		Two to three hour time slots, plus time for a break
On the day		Check and pre-test facility's equipment and lighting
		Set up seating and table arrangements
		Set up information tables, displays and sign-in table. Refreshments OK? In agenda?
		Arrange hand-outs and other informational materials
During the community meeting		Register participants
		Start on time or explain delays
		Do instructions of speakers and participants
		Review agenda and objectives of meeting
		Carefully monitor timing and speakers, according to agenda
		Ensure that everyone who wants to speak does so, and that no one person dominates
		Record key comments and input of flip charts and in reporter's notes
		Identify next steps, including how you will report back to participants
		Make sure participants have contact information
Media		Speech notes
		Post/Star article
		Council e-news
		Feature articles
		Community Service Announcements
After the community meeting		Hold de-brief with organising team (staff, consultants)
		Review participant comment sheets and evaluations
		Review recorded notes
		Prepare report incorporating all comments and identifying trends
		Revise the rest of the scheduled community meeting programs
		Assign follow-up tasks if required

Community meeting agenda

Depending on the community engagement objectives and the processes used, a community meeting can fall under a number of categories.

The example agenda below demonstrates that the information session concludes after agenda item 3. Clearly the objective is to inform the community. Closing remarks would acknowledge the community's interest, reinforce key points and perhaps invite those present to make submissions at a later date or encourage them to attend future engagement opportunities.

If the community meeting continues and concludes at agenda item 5, participants are able to provide feedback. The objective is to have a dialogue with the community and obtain views for consideration. Closing remarks would acknowledge the value of receiving the feedback which will be considered as part of the overall process, prior to decision-making.

Should the community meeting continue and conclude at agenda item 9, participants are provided with the opportunity to be actively involved and provide solutions. The objective is to collaborate and partner with community members. Closing remarks would focus on the value of joint problem solving and outcomes.

Modification and flexibility of design are encouraged to ensure that the meeting's objectives are met and the engagement activity is effective.

Figure 1: Example Agenda

Community Engagement level	Tool/Category	Typical process/ agenda item for community meeting
Inform	Information session	1. Welcome and overview
		2. Background, needs, benefits and decision making process
		3. Questions for clarification
Consult	Focus Group Session Workshop	4. Group activity to identify and discuss relevant issues
		5. Small group presentation to front
Involve/Collaborate	Focus Group Session Workshop Stakeholder Meeting Deliberative Forum	6. Whole-group activity to prioritise issues
		7. Small group activity to develop possible outcomes, suggestions, solutions
		8. Presentation to front
		9. Whole group priorities and weights possible outcomes
		10. Conclusion remarks

Table of Engagement Techniques

(this table isn’t all-inclusive, rather it showcases examples for each level of the IAP2 spectrum)

Adapted from the IAP2 Toolbox, 2006 & Maroochy Shire Council Toolbox, 2003

Consider techniques for <i>Inform</i> level	Always Think It Through	What Can Go Right	What Can Go Wrong
Printed Materials <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Fact Sheets• Newsletter• Advertising• Brochures• Issue Papers	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Keep it short & simple• Make it visually interesting and engaging but not too busy or slick• Proof-read all documents• Engage randomly selected staff members to trial material & provide feedback before distribution to the public• Use language that is inclusive and jargon free• When possible include opportunities for comment and include reply paid forms or envelopes to encourage two-way communication• Explain community’s role and how comments have affected project decisions• Offer interpretation services	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Can reach a large target audience• Public look for information in regular format eg. Newsletter,• Media column• Allows for technical & legal reviews• Written comments returned in reply paid format• Documentation of public involvement facilitated• Mailing list development	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Distribution planning inadequate• Materials do not reach the mark• Materials not read• Limited capacity to communicate complicated concepts• Information misinterpreted
Displays <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Council Offices• Libraries• Community Centres,• Shopping centre• Schools	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Establish regular sites if possible to build on community culture• Make sure personnel at locations know what materials are about & where they are located & who to contact for further information• Consider electronic displays, eg. touch screens, TV video loop presentations• Make sure materials are removed when past their use by date	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Information is accessible to the public at relatively little cost• Public use the distribution locations to look for materials• Public visit Council facilities and learn more about service provision• Public ask for further information at Council distribution sites	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Distribution sites are overcrowded with information and the materials get lost among the collection of materials• There is no active promotion of the materials• Upkeep of information
Council Website Information directly into the household	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Needs to be visible & easy to navigate• Keep information updated	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Capable of reaching a large audience at low cost• Popular information resource	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• People without access disadvantaged• Technical difficulties• Hard to navigate
Open House/ City Expo <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Communities engage at their own pace in a comfortable environment• Drop in to individually to view plans, ask questions, give opinions have an informal chat	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Consider the demographics of the area & time sessions accordingly• Greet people at the door & explain the format, provide comments sheet	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Facilitates a wide variety of people• Break down perceived barriers• Fosters communication• More convenient for people• Engages people more effectively• Minimise aggressive behaviour towards Council staff	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Special interest groups may boycott or disrupt• Staff resource intensive
Information Session Community meeting held at various times and locations	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Consider the demographics of the area & time sessions accordingly• May need to hold a number of sessions depending on size of project/issue	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Public gets the same information at the same time• Time effective way of providing information for a wide group of people• Structured format	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Can be difficult to control group if derailers/agitators present; Needs a competent facilitator• People may feel intimidated about speaking in front of others• If not well promoted, may get limited people attending

Consider techniques for <i>Consult</i> level	Always Think It Through	What Can Go Right	What Can Go Wrong
As above	Refer to table for <i>Inform</i>	Refer to table for <i>Inform</i>	Refer to table for <i>Inform</i>
Briefings	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Keep it short & simple• Use clear, jargon free, inclusive language• Use easy to read diagrams and visuals that are consistent with the verbal and written content	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Control of information/ presentation• Opportunities to clarify misinformation• Reach a wider variety of people• Evaluate and readjust approach	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Some groups may be left out• Expectations may be raised• Information may be used inappropriately
Surveys <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Blanket distribution• Random distribution• Selected distribution	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Surveys should be developed using specific guidelines and tested before distribution• Collection and method of analysis to be considered• Preference of confidentiality and anonymity of respondents• Can be used to consult on sensitive issues	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Can gather information from people other than those with special or from people who might not attend meetings• Economical and efficient means to collect data from a large number of people• Statistical results have more credibility	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Need statistical and research expertise to design survey and analyse findings• Response rate can be poor• Communities over surveyed• Can be labour intensive• Questions may be misinterpreted• Results not trusted• Results not fed back to community effectively• Unsuitable for complex issues
Technical Assistance <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Briefings• Meetings• Workshops	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Technical experts must be perceived as credible by community• Ensure technical experts have access to information about the community’s attitudes	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Build credibility and address public concerns about equity• Facts in dispute can be debated and consensus reached	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Resource availability may be limited• Technical experts may not be prepared for working too closely with community and may lack empathy with community concerns or use technical jargon
Focus Groups Small group discussions with 6-12 people	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Ensure tasks are clear• Non-threatening environment where participants can share views• Skilled facilitation	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Provides opportunity to test material• Verify prior assumptions• Raise unexpected additional benefits• Ability to find out current issues	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Facilitator not impartial or not skilled enough to deal with some behaviours• Participants may feel restricted by the approach• May be perceived as exclusive• May be costly• People may attend with their own agenda, manipulate the meeting and intimidate others
Submissions Allows interested community members to respond formally to Council proposals	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Provide the community with detailed information on issue/ project	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Written information is less likely to be misinterpreted	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Possible poor response rate

				Inform	Consult	Involve	Collaborate	Empower
Consider techniques for <i>Involve</i> level	Always Think It Through	What Can Go Right	What Can Go Wrong					
As above	Refer to table for <i>Inform & Consult</i>	Refer to table for <i>Inform & Consult</i>	Refer to table for <i>Inform & Consult</i>					
Interviews Used when specific information from a small group of people is adequate <ul style="list-style-type: none">Face to faceTelephone	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Be clear and open about the intentConsider questions carefully to gather relevant informationEnsure effective information recording methodsBe inclusiveBe equitableVary timeframe for interviews to reach more people	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Gather clear understanding of public concerns and issuesIndividuals feel inclined to provide input based on personalised formatCan help to engage hard-to-reach groups	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Can be very time consumingParticipants can take their issues out on the interviewerParticipants are tired of being interviewed on a range of issues and will not engage willinglyNeed skilled interviewersFace-to-face interviews may pose personal safety risks for the interviewer					
Workshops Community members work together on a number of identified tasks that clarify issues or provide solutions	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Know how you plan to use public input before the workshopHow you are going to manage the group – rules for engagementUse trained facilitators to ensure the aims of the workshop are achievedOutcomes of workshop need to feedback prior to making decisions	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Participants can use the opportunity to raise their concerns, needs, issuesFoster equity and credibilityOpportunity to hear the “silent” voicesSpecial interest groups get to listen to other voicesUnexpected additional benefits	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Small numbers of participants which may not be representative of communityResistance to breaking up into small groups by some participantsSpecial interest groups monopolise the workshopParticipants alter the agendaFacilitator not impartial or not skilled enough to deal with some behavioursInformation session format used rather than workshop formatFeedback not recorded effectivelyParticipants may raise unrelated issues or personal/topical issues					
Tours/ Field Trips	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Make accessible to diverse groupsProvide itinerary/tour guidePlan question/answer sessionPlan refreshment break and provide water during the tripConsider safety	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Opportunity to develop rapport with stakeholdersIncrease knowledge of issues and process for all involved	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Number of participants can be limited by resource availabilityIntention can be misinterpretedProject site or Council facility may reveal unintended conditionsAggrieved participant may take the opportunity to monopolise captured audience					

Consider techniques for <i>Collaborate</i> level	Always Think It Through	What Can Go Right	What Can Go Wrong
Advisory committee	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Commit to full processAim for a cross-section of participants from the communityCan tap into existing groups and organisationsRequires a clear line of communication between the committee and CouncilNeed an exit strategy to ensure committee disbands when role no longer required	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Participants can be exposed to views and arguments from different backgroundsWorks well when the composition of the group remains stableAble to deal with specific issue(s) in a detailed mannerPartnership approach allows for consensus in problem solvingSpecial interest lobbying can be diffusedCan develop capacity in communityHelp build trust and cooperation between key stakeholders	<ul style="list-style-type: none">No clear formal mechanism to input into decision-making processPeople do not have the time required to commit to the processTimeframes are unrealisticAgenda too ambitious or not specific enough

				Inform	Consult	Involve	Collaborate	Empower
Consider techniques for <i>Empower</i> level	Always Think It Through	What Can Go Right	What Can Go Wrong					
Citizen Juries Group of 12-25 citizens selected to learn about an issue, often controversial, and then examine the data by questioning decision-makers, technical experts, and interested parties – all of who are witnesses to the process. The Jury makes recommendations based on their evaluation of the discussions	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Ensure the sessions are managed by a skilled facilitatorBe clear about how the results will be usedEnsure a cross-section from the communityConsider current levels of expertise of participantsParticipants are randomly selectedProvide information prior to the group gets together	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Bring new thinking to the issue at handGreat opportunity to develop deep understanding of an issueHelps build participant capacity through involvement and increased knowledgeLimitations and possibilities can be identifiedCan dispel misinformationCan build credibilityCan provide unexpected benefits	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Group selection can be mistrustedParticipants may not show up on the daySessions can lose focusCost can be extensiveTime consuming for all involvedSample of community is smallExtensive to conduct in terms of staff, payment of jury and experienced facilitator					

Evaluation matrix template

Evaluation											
Subject/ Project											
Dimension											Notes
Effective: achieved objectives of consultation brief; value for money; timely	Not at all 1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	Completely 10	Estimated hard savings:
Flexible: tailored to requirements; adaptable to changing needs; inclusive	Not at all 1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	Completely 10	
Open, fair, subject to evaluation: ethical and compliant; invite feedback from respondents and clients	Not at all 1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	Completely 10	
Professionalism: deliver sound advice to the client - offer solutions; easy to reach and easy to communicate	Not at all 1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	Completely 10	
Quality: all tools were well-used, well-conducted; well-facilitated community sessions; consultation reports or transcripts are of a high calibre	Not at all 1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	Completely 10	

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