



Engaging Campaspe

A framework for effective community engagement

PART A: Guidelines for the application of Council's Community Engagement Framework



Campaspe
Shire Council

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1. Introduction

Community engagement is fundamental to good decision-making. Campaspe Shire Council is committed to capturing the input of the community and stakeholders wherever possible, so as to provide effective leadership and enhanced delivery of services to the residents of Campaspe.

Council's Community Engagement Framework has been developed to help improve the way in which Council captures the views and ideas of the Campaspe community. This current document ('the Guide') stems from Council's Community Engagement Policy (Policy 59). This Guide expands upon Policy 59 by setting out Council's Community Engagement Framework and providing information about the practical implementation of community engagement activities.

What is community engagement?

The term 'engagement' carries a broad definition, and is generally understood to cover ideas such as consultation, communication, education, public participation, participative democracy or working in partnership. It can therefore include a variety of approaches, such as one-way communication or information delivery, consultation, involvement and collaboration in decision-making, and empowered action in informal groups or formal partnerships.

The word 'community' is also a very broad term used to define groups of people; whether they are stakeholders, interest groups, citizen groups, etc. A community may be a geographic location (community of place), a community of similar interest (community of practice), or a community of affiliation or identity (such as industry or sporting club).

Community engagement is therefore a planned process with the specific purpose of working with identified groups of people - whether they are connected by geographic location, special interest, affiliation or identity - to address issues affecting their well-being. The linking of the term 'community' to 'engagement' serves to broaden the scope, shifting the focus from the individual to the collective, with the associated implications for inclusiveness ensuring consideration is made of the diversity that exists within any community.

Why undertake community engagement?

In short, being properly informed leads to better decision making.

When it comes to making important decisions on issues that affect local residents and businesses, it is therefore imperative that Council takes into account the views, ideas and local knowledge of the Campaspe community. This ensures that Council is not only aware of the prevailing views of local constituents, but that decisions made by Council can be supported and 'owned' by the wider community.

Council identifies a broad range of benefits stemming from effective public participation. These include:

- ✓ Increased community awareness about Council's services, planning and program delivery
- ✓ Increased awareness across Council of community views and the issues that should be considered as part of the decision-making process
- ✓ Increased awareness of the needs, priorities and diversity of the local community, which in turn ensures that Council's service provision and planning functions are aligned appropriately
- ✓ Increased level of community ownership and acceptance of decisions affecting the municipality
- ✓ Council and the community working together to address local issues
- ✓ Potential for time, resource and cost savings for Council, such as through avoiding inadequately informed decisions

In addition, Council will realise a range of benefits that enhance its own operations and standing, such as:

- ✓ More resilient relationships within the community
- ✓ Enhanced reputation within the community

Part A – Community Engagement Framework

- ✓ Better shared partnerships and networks

When should Council undertake community engagement?

Generally speaking, Council will undertake community engagement whenever there is likely to be a change in the existing environment or the provision of a service to the community as a result of a Council decision, or when there is an opportunity for stakeholders to influence a Council project or its outcome.

Community engagement will therefore apply to a broad range of decision-making processes. Examples may include the following:

Type of project requiring Council decision	Examples:
High-level organisational plans	<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Council Plan▪ Campaspe: Our Future▪ Municipal Health and Wellbeing Plan
Development of specific-focus strategic plans	<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Waste management plans▪ Asset management plans▪ Domestic Animal Management Plan
Service planning	<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Service plans for the delivery of individual Council services
Place-based planning	<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Whole-of-township strategies▪ Community planning▪ Community places projects
Statutory decisions	<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Strategic land use planning▪ Town planning applications

In terms of the final category of statutory decisions, this guide does not seek to vary the requirements set down by legislative instruments - statutory processes must be adhered to. However this guide (and the accompanying Toolkit) may assist to 'fill in the gaps' or improve upon those processes where opportunities present.

It should be noted that Council may not be able to engage widely in certain circumstances. Such situations include:

- When time frames and methodology have been predetermined by other levels of government or where other levels of government are leading the consultation.
- When an immediate response is required, such as in response to an emergency or where lead times preclude detailed community engagement.

Who will Council engage with?

Community engagement, by its very definition, is about ensuring that the right stakeholders are involved in Council's decision making process. It is therefore essential to understand who should be approached or invited to participate in the community engagement process. This involves thinking carefully and broadly about who will have an interest in, or be affected by, the matter at hand. Not all stakeholders necessarily need to be engaged at the same level – activities must therefore be tailored to suit specific circumstances and the stakeholders involved.

Part A – Community Engagement Framework

Stakeholders for the purpose of Council decision making may include the following:

Community:

This group includes individuals or groups who may be affected by or who have an interest in Council decision making. This definition of community will often include residents, business owners, rate payers, community groups and clubs, or those who work in the Shire but reside elsewhere.

Specific interest stakeholders:

These are organised groups and organisations who may be affected by or who have an interest in Council decision making. Stakeholders may include the likes of State and Federal governments, business groups, not-for-profit organisations, other local governments and service providers.

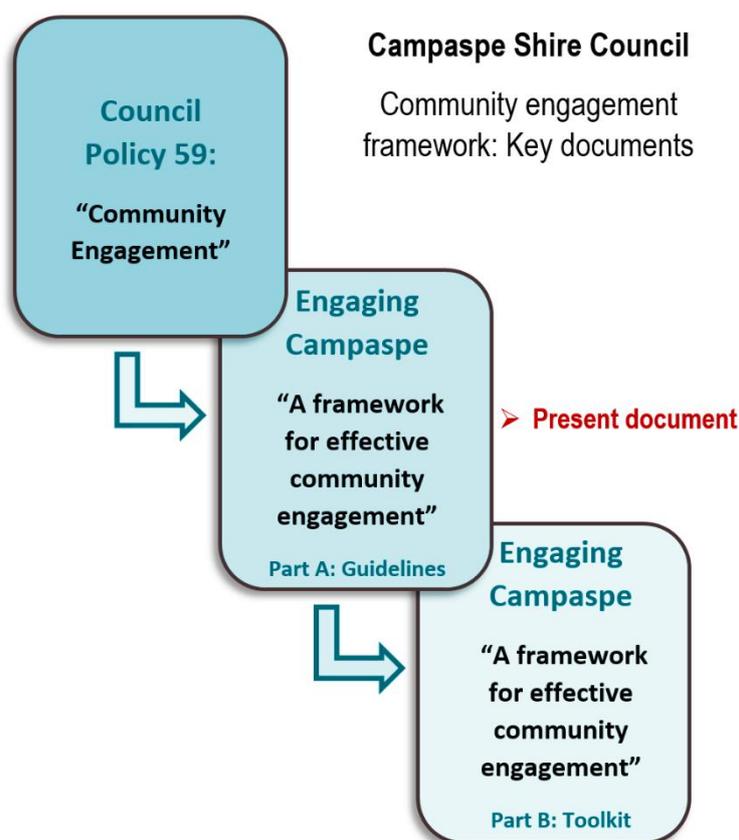
Harder to reach groups:

There are some people and groups who may find it more difficult to participate in engagement activities and are often referred to as 'hard to reach'. For example, those from minority groups or with limited personal resources such as linguistically diverse people, teenagers, newly arrived residents or people with particular disabilities. Demographically, Campaspe has a higher proportion of aboriginal residents, young people, and older residents – all of which have specific needs and can provide valuable insight into specific issues. Engagement approaches should always be adapted to meet the needs of each target group so as to improve inclusion.

When and how to use this guide

This guide forms the second document in a suite of three documents that together assist Council, Council staff and the community understand the organisation's commitment to, and practical delivery of, community engagement.

The following diagram sets out the structure of the key documents that establish, guide and implement Council's community engagement framework.



Part A – Community Engagement Framework

A brief description of each of these documents and their intended audience is provided as follows:

Document	Description	Audience
Council Policy 59	<p>The keynote underpinning document that establishes Council's commitment to effective community engagement. In the main, Policy 59 sets out the framework for community engagement, such as by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Articulating the key principles and objectives underpinning Council's community engagement practices; and ➤ Nominating the preferred engagement model ("IAP2" model) to be employed by Council in its engagement activities. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Councillors ▪ Council staff ▪ General public
ENGAGING CAMPASPE: A framework for effective community engagement	<p>A two-part document that assists with the practical delivery and implementation of community engagement by Council staff. It is set out as follows:</p> <p><u>Part A: Guidelines</u> (ie. this document):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Affirms the underlying principles and objectives of community engagement ➤ Establishes the suite of documents that apply to community engagement activities ➤ Explains the basis of the IAP2 model and how the model should be employed; and ➤ Sets out decision-making, reporting and governance structures for the organisation. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Councillors ▪ Council staff ▪ General public
	<p><u>Part B: Staff Toolkit:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Provides templates for staff for the development of a Community Engagement Plan ➤ Provides instructional guidance and practical information for the application of effective community engagement techniques 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Council staff

Purpose and structure of this document

This document complements Council Policy 59. It has been developed in order to:

- Inform the community about Council's approach to community engagement and to encourage greater community involvement.
- Improve the nature of decision making and help to strengthen the Councils relationship with the community and other stakeholders.
- Enable an effective, consistent and transparent approach to the planning and implementation of community engagement.
- Provide guidance to officers, Councillors and community on the organisation's consultation principles, methods and resources, and the various roles and responsibilities within the organisation.

Part A – Community Engagement Framework

The subsequent chapters of this document contain the following information for users:

- **Section 2: Council's Community Engagement Model** affirms Council's community engagement principles and the IAP2 model
- **Section 3: Practical Implementation** provides an overview of the Council's seven-step approach to the implementation of engagement activities
- **Section 4: Roles and Responsibilities within Council** explains the various responsibilities for delivery and oversight of community engagement within the organisation
- **Section 5: Further Resources** provides information on additional resources for staff planning for or undertaking community engagement activities.

2. COUNCIL'S COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT MODEL

Council's commitment to effective engagement

Council Policy 59 sets out a range of principles that underpin Council's approach to community engagement. These are reproduced here so as to affirm the importance of the principles and their role in informing Council's broader community engagement framework.

These principles are additionally set out for staff as part of checklists in Part B: Staff Toolkit to ensure that community engagement activities undertaken by the organisation meet the expectations of Council.

PRINCIPLE 1:

Be open and inclusive

This means that Council:

- ✓ Recognises community participation as a right of all citizens and an integral component of informed decision-making
- ✓ Creates, supports and promotes opportunities for the community to actively participate in decision making
- ✓ Encourages involvement from a wide cross-section of the community using engagement processes that are accessible and inclusive
- ✓ Operates under the key value of openness and is committed to ensuring that the community is well informed about Council's service delivery, planning and decision making processes

PRINCIPLE 2:

Create mutual trust and respect and be accountable

This means that Council:

- ✓ Treats all participants in the engagement process with respect and dignity
- ✓ Approaches engagement from an impartial perspective, free from bias toward any stakeholder involved in the process
- ✓ Is accountable, accessible and ethical in all dealings with the community

PRINCIPLE 3

Engage early and be clear

This means that Council:

- ✓ Seeks early engagement and regularly involves the community in decision making
- ✓ Communicates clearly the objectives of the engagement process and provide community members with all available and relevant information as part of the consultation engagement process to ensure informed discussion
- ✓ Communicates the parameters of the engagement process to participants from the outset, including legislative requirements, Council's sphere of influence, conflicting community views, policy frameworks and context, budget constraints etc.
- ✓ Acknowledges that planning is a critical process to deliver successful outcomes and is committed to developing and implementing community engagement plans

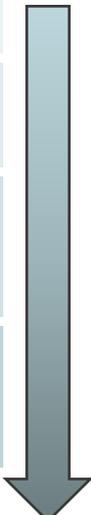
Part A – Community Engagement Framework

<p>PRINCIPLE 4 Commit to consideration and feedback</p>	<p>This means that Council:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Is committed to demonstrating that we have considered all community contributions and relevant data, prior to making any decisions that affect the local community ✓ Is committed to providing participants with feedback at key stages throughout the project and upon completion and how community input influenced the decision
<p>PRINCIPLE 5 Allocate adequate skills and resources</p>	<p>This means that Council:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Endeavours to ensure that sufficient timeframes and adequate resources are allocated to engagement processes ✓ Coordinates its community engagement processes where possible to optimise resources, ensure efficiency and avoid duplication ✓ Recognises the skills required to undertake community engagement, and will provide staff with opportunities for further skill development and training

The IAP2 model of public participation

Council's approach to community engagement is based on the spectrum of engagement activities as advocated by the International Association for Public Participation (IAP2). Given that community engagement can take many forms, the International Association for Public Participation (IAP2) has developed the 'IAP2 public participation spectrum' to help groups define the public's role in any public participation process. The spectrum contains five levels of engagement, as follows:

IAP2 Public Participation Spectrum	
Public participation goal	Description
<p>Inform</p>	<p>To provide the public with balanced and objective information to assist them in understanding the problem, alternatives, opportunities and/ or solutions.</p>
<p>Consult</p>	<p>To obtain public feedback on analysis, alternatives and/or decisions</p>
<p>Involve</p>	<p>To work directly with the public throughout the process to ensure that public concerns and aspirations are consistently understood and considered.</p>
<p>Collaborate</p>	<p>To partner with the public in each aspect of the decision including the development of alternatives and the identification of the preferred solution.</p>



Increasing level of public involvement in decision-making

Part A – Community Engagement Framework

Empower

To place final decision making in the hands of the public

Source: IAP2 – foundations for public participation

The level of engagement should be determined prior to the commencement of any community engagement actions. It is important that the community and stakeholders have a clear understanding about the purpose of the community engagement, e.g. if the purpose of engagement is to 'involve' but not 'collaborate' this should be stated at the commencement of the engagement or activity. The assessment and determination of the appropriate level of engagement will be determined through the use of decision-making tools within the Staff Toolkit, which consider the complexity, opportunities, issues and/or constraints of the activity.

While the IAP2 Spectrum for Public Participation has been adopted for this framework, within the context of Local Government the highest level of 'Empower' will rarely be achievable or appropriate. The spectrum notes that the level of 'Empower' places the "final decision-making in the hands of the public". As elected representatives for the community, final decisions will generally rest with the elected Councillors.

3. PRACTICAL IMPLEMENTATION

This section provides high-level information on the practical implementation of Council’s community engagement model. This includes such issues as:

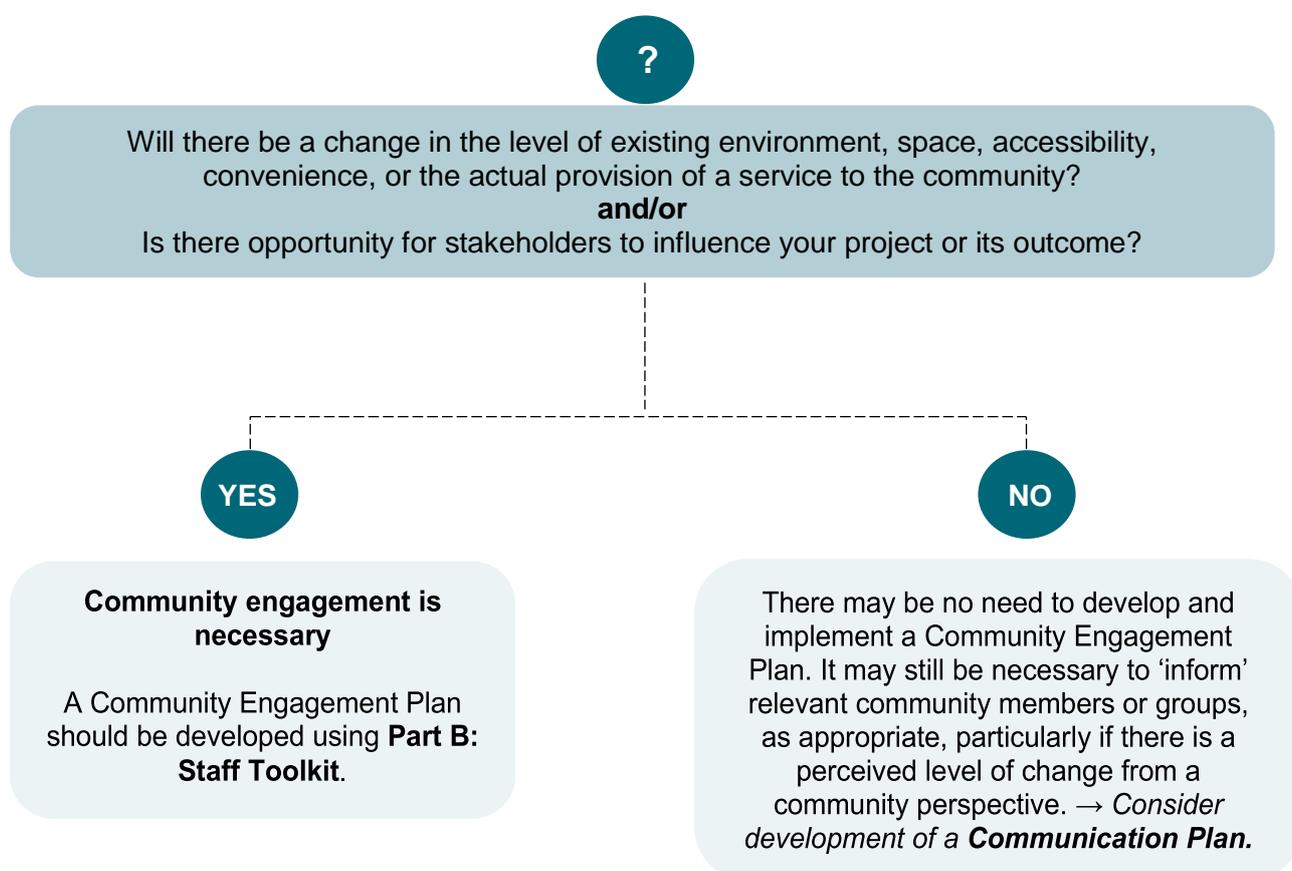
- When community engagement needs to be undertaken
- The steps to undertaking community engagement
- The techniques used to maximise community engagement outcomes

Reference should be made to the second document (Part B) in this series, the Staff Toolkit. The Toolkit provides a further level of information on how to undertake community engagement under the Campaspe model, and includes templates for the development of a Community Engagement Plan.

How does Council determine if it will undertake community engagement?

The need for undertaking community engagement will primarily depend upon whether there is a sufficient level of community interest in an issue. Generally speaking, communities will have an interest in an issue if there is a change proposed to a Council service or a Council-managed public space. Aside from being ‘common courtesy’ to include communities in local decision-making, local residents, users and other stakeholders often hold perspectives and information that can influence the outcome of a decision.

Determining whether to engage with the community can be simplified by the following tool:



Part A – Community Engagement Framework

In determining whether community engagement should take place, other considerations may include the following:

- Whether there a history associated with the project or issue that may impact on the current situation
- Whether the project or issue has the potential to become politicised
- Whether there is an opportunity to build or maintain a positive relationship through engaging proactively and openly with a section of the community
- Whether there is a chance that there will be considerable public resentment if the community is displeased with, or feels no ownership over, the outcome
- Whether there is any relevant legislation that mandates community engagement

The 7 Steps for Community Engagement

Council's implementation methodology under IAP2 community engagement model employs a seven-step process. This seven-step process begins with the task of understanding the scope of the decision that needs to be resolved, follows through with the practical steps of planning for and undertaking the community engagement activities, and concludes with the assessment and reporting of the community engagement findings.



Part A – Community Engagement Framework

The table below provides a summary of the process, including the purpose and key inclusions of each step. The full process of developing a community engagement plan using the seven-step process is contained in **Part B: Staff Toolkit**.

STEP	SUMMARY OF INCLUSIONS
<p>STEP 1: Define</p>	<p><i>Purpose of this step:</i> To understand the scope of the issue at hand.</p> <p><i>Key considerations and activities in this step include:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Understanding the scope of the decision to be made at the end of the process, and developing engaging activities to meet this end. ▪ Understanding the objectives and purpose of the proposed community engagement. ▪ Understanding any relevant legislation or internal strategies that will impact on the decision-making process or the scope of engagement activities.
<p>STEP 2: Identify</p>	<p><i>Purpose of this step:</i> To identify who needs to be engaged?</p> <p><i>Key considerations and activities in this step include:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Identifying who will be affected by, interested in, or be able to inform the decision. ▪ Understanding how various stakeholders are affected and the nature of their interest. ▪ Identifying the community's capacity and willingness to participate, and whether there are any barriers to participation.
<p>STEP 3: Understand</p>	<p><i>Purpose of this step:</i> To determine the methods and process of engagement.</p> <p><i>Key considerations and activities in this step include:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Determining what level of participation is required (Inform, Consult, Involve, Collaborate or Empower). ▪ Identifying the resources required to undertake the engagement and how long the public participation will take? ▪ Ensuring effective communication with participants.
<p>STEP 4: Document</p>	<p><i>Purpose of this step:</i> To provide for proper recording and reporting of stakeholder input.</p> <p><i>Key considerations and activities in this step include:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Planning for the engagement to be recorded and subsequently reported back to the community. ▪ Determining whether there are any risks that need to be managed, including planning for certain scenarios. ▪ Defining how the stakeholder input will be used.
<p>STEP 5: Implement</p>	<p><i>Purpose of this step:</i> To implement the engagement plan.</p> <p><i>Key considerations and activities in this step include:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Ensuring that the engagement plan is followed and kept on track. ▪ Implementing changes to course if different risks or scenarios arise. ▪ Ensuring that other internal processes are working as planned, such as media and public communications.

Part A – Community Engagement Framework

STEP 6: Understand	<p>Purpose of this step: To understand the engagement outcomes.</p> <p>Key considerations and activities in this step include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Reviewing the information and input from the engagement exercise.▪ Monitoring progress, budget and timelines to meet objectives.▪ Monitoring and respond to risks.▪ Reviewing the successes/failings of the activity against the engagement plan.
STEP 7: Influence	<p>Purpose of this step: To formalise the outcomes of the engagement activities.</p> <p>Key considerations and activities in this step include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Understanding how the engagement has informed the decision that needs to be made.▪ Identifying how to document the engagement activities▪ Undertaking reporting to Council on the community engagement outcomes.▪ Undertaking public communication to ‘close the loop’ on the engagement exercise.

Other matters that will need to be included in the planning and implementation include:

- Securing relevant internal approvals
- The development of effective internal communication channels
- Inclusion of Council’s Community Engagement unit
- Planning for media and communications activities
- Ongoing internal briefings and reporting, including to Council

These all form part of the integrated planning tools available in **Part B: Staff Toolkit**.

Part A – Community Engagement Framework

Community engagement methods

There are a broad range of methods Council may use when engaging with the community and other stakeholders. Some of these will be new methods, such as the use of online forums, while other will have been in use for some time already.

Some of the methods Council will employ for effective community engagement include the following:

Methods of Engagement	
<ul style="list-style-type: none">➤ Stakeholder meetings and forums<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Business forums➤ Workshops, community meetings and local events<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ School workshops➤ Public exhibitions and submissions➤ Surveys - online and paper-based➤ Council's website and social media channels<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Dedicated online forums➤ Mail-outs	<ul style="list-style-type: none">➤ Media releases and newspaper advertisements➤ Customer service counters➤ Community and stakeholder reference groups<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Advisory Committees and Steering Committees➤ Stakeholder interviews➤ Drop-in sessions➤ Public signage

Council may choose to use one or several of these techniques when engaging on a project or issue. Further information and guidance on selecting and implementing the most appropriate engagement techniques is available in **Part B: Staff Toolkit**.

4. ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES WITHIN COUNCIL

All Councillors and officers at Campaspe Shire Council are responsible for implementing the Community Engagement Framework. However, some staff or teams have specific responsibilities allocated, as described below:

Council (as a decision-making body) is responsible for:

- Setting the overarching community engagement framework
- Providing effective leadership on matters of Council's engagement policies and practices
- Raising issues of non-compliance with the Executive Management Group

Individual Councillors are responsible for:

- Attending public consultation sessions, as appropriate
- Listening to public feedback and opinion
- Contributing information or facts to a public discussion, giving care to remain objective, impartial, and consistent with any adopted Council decision on a matter.

The Executive Management Group has overall responsibility for ensuring the organisation is meeting Council and community expectations for the Community Engagement Framework.

The Community Engagement Department is responsible for overseeing and facilitating Council's Community Engagement Framework. Responsibilities include:

- Progressively reviewing and maintaining Policy 59, making recommendations to Council for any changes
- Maintaining the 'Engaging Campaspe' framework documents and Staff Toolkit
- Providing support for staff undertaking community engagement
- Planning and implementing community engagement for high-level engagement activities or where requested by other teams
- Actively promoting community engagement across Campaspe Shire

The Communications and Public Affairs Department is responsible for:

- Working with departments to formulate clear and effective media strategies to secure good engagement outcomes
- Ensuring public documentation effectively communicates with stakeholders in Plain English and is consistent with Council's Style Guide
- Developing and maintaining organisational standards with regard to social media usage for engagement purposes

The Information Technology Department is responsible for:

- Facilitating the provision of electronic platforms that assist with embedding community engagement practices in all Council activities

Executive Managers and Department Managers are responsible for approving community engagement plans (depending on the level of engagement) and for ensuring the smooth implementation of engagement plans by their teams.

Part A – Community Engagement Framework

Internal decision-making and approvals

To ensure the consistency of community engagement proposals and written plans, all community engagement activities should receive approval before implementation commences.

Decisions on whether to undertake community engagement; and all associated documented community engagement plans, will be approved by Department Managers or Executive Managers in accordance with the following table:

Public participation goal	Level of approval for Community Engagement Plan:
Inform	Department Manager
Consult	
Involve	Executive Manager
Collaborate	
Empower	Council

It is reiterated that the structure of local government will generally preclude the use of the participation level of Empower. However, were a suitable situation to arise, all approvals, plans and relevant terms of reference should be approved by the elected Council. Notwithstanding, Councillors must always be kept informed of planned engagement activities within their Ward by way of Communication Report or Briefing, as relevant to the scope of the engagement activity.

In all circumstances, copies of approved Community Engagement Plans should be provided to the Community Engagement Department for the purposes of record keeping, monitoring and review of improvement opportunities for Council's framework and supporting materials.

Operating protocols for engagement

There are a number of additional operating protocols that need to be adhered when undertaking community engagement activities so as to ensure a structured and coordinated approach by the organisation.

Media Releases

- Media Releases are to be prepared by the Communications and Public Affairs Department, following existing approval processes.

Brochures, fact sheets and leaflets

- All brochures and leaflets must be provided to the Communications and Public Affairs Department for review of content and corporate style prior to distribution.
- Final copies of brochures and leaflets must be recorded in Council's document management system, and copies provided to Customer Service to assist with any customer enquiries.

Social media

- The use of social media (Facebook, Twitter, YouTube etc.) must be approved by the Manager Communications and Public Affairs.

Part A – Community Engagement Framework

Community surveys

- Community surveys are required to be jointly approved by the Manager Community Engagement and Manager Corporate Planning.
- Customer Service should be advised of the distribution of community surveys, with instructions on how to respond to any enquiries.
- Councillors should be provided with a copy of community surveys being distributed in their Wards prior to distribution, along with a covering Communication Report.

Community meetings (public meetings, information sessions, workshops etc.)

- Community meetings must be approved by the relevant Manager, and if the engagement carries a High Risk (as determined by **Part B: Staff Toolkit**), by the relevant Executive Manager
- The Council Calendar and Community Engagement Register should be checked via the Community Engagement Manager when arranging engagement meetings to avoid clashes with other events.
- Customer Service should be advised of any community meetings that involve broad community participation, with instructions on how to respond to any enquiries
- Councillors should be made aware of all community meetings that involve broad community participation or are of a Ward or Council significance.
- A summary of meeting notes should be provided to all meeting participants within 10 working days of attending the event.

Written correspondence

- All correspondence received by Council should be responded to within 10 working days, as per Council's Customer Service Charter.

5. FURTHER RESOURCES

Further resources are available to staff to assist with the effective implementation of Council's community engagement framework.

Resource	How to make use of the resource
<i>Engaging Campaspe - A Framework For Effective Community Engagement: Part B: Staff Toolkit for the development of Community Engagement Plans</i>	Must be used for any Council engagement activity. Contains a template for the development of community engagement plans
Community Engagement Manager / Community Engagement Team	Should be approached for assistance with: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Interpretation or understanding of Community Engagement Framework ▪ Development of community engagement plans ▪ Implementation of engagement activities (in particular with larger engagement exercises.)
<i>Strategic Planning Model Framework: Staff guide for undertaking strategic projects and plans</i>	Guide for the undertaking of strategic projects and plans. Council's strategic planning framework requires community engagement for most strategic projects.
Communications and Public Affairs Manager	Should be approached for assistance with: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The development of public materials to support engagement activities ▪ The development of public messages and media releases
IAP2 – International Association for Public Participation: → https://www.iap2.org.au/Home	Information and additional resources such as: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Case studies in public engagement ▪ Conference presentations ▪ Professional development opportunities

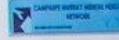


VICTORIAN
MENTAL HEALTH MONTH
7 OCT - 6 NOV 2018

Better Mental Health For All

Grace and Hope

Proudly supported by:



We would like to acknowledge the traditional custodians of the land, the Yorta Yorta people and pay our respects to elders both past and present.



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