



TATIARA DISTRICT COUNCIL

PUBLIC CONSULTATION POLICY
&
COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT
FRAMEWORK

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INTRODUCTION

Tatiara District Council is committed to open, accountable and responsive decision making which is informed by effective communication and consultation between Council and the community.

In carrying out our consultation processes, Council applies the following principles:

- Members of the community have a right to be informed about issues affecting their area and their lives and to influence council's decisions about these.
- Community interest will vary depending on the issue and the number of people affected, and council's level of consultation will reflect this.
- Community involvement in Council decision making should result in greater confidence in the Council and responsive decision making.
- Council decision making will be open, transparent and accountable.

Our Public Consultation Policy sets out the steps we will take to encourage community involvement in the planning and decision making processes of Council. It is both a policy document and a practical resource.

As a policy document it sets out Council's commitment to, and understanding of community engagement in the Tatiara. As a practical resource, the Community Engagement Framework provides a clear definition of community engagement and importantly sets specific standards for our engagement: When will we engage? Who will we engage? How will we engage?

POLICY OBJECTIVE

The purpose of this policy is to ensure that Council meets its legislative obligations in regard to public consultation by:

- Using appropriate and cost effective methods which are relevant to the specific circumstances of each consultation topic
- Informing and involving the local community, key stakeholders and interested parties
- Using feedback to enhance decision making.

SCOPE

This policy applies to Council Members sitting as the elected body, council employees, contractors, agents and consultants acting on behalf of Council.

The Chief Executive Officer is responsible for the implementation of the Public Consultation Policy, establishing the consultation level, reporting outcomes of the consultations to the council, reviewing the value of the policy, and determining elements within that process where Council has delegated responsibility.

POLICY STATEMENT

The preparation and adoption of this policy fulfils Council's obligations under section 50(1) of the *Local Government Act 1999*. Section 50 provides that:

- The council must set out the steps that the council will follow in cases where the Local Government Act requires consultation on a matter, and
- The council may set out the steps that council will follow in other cases involving the council's decision-making.

In addition, under the Local Government Act the council has the following obligations where it is required by law to follow its public consultation policy.

- Council must provide interested persons with a reasonable opportunity to make submissions regarding relevant matters
- Council must publish a notice in a newspaper circulating in the area and on the council's website, describing the matter under consideration and invite interested persons to make submissions within a period (which must be at least 21 days) stated in the notice
- Council must consider any submission received from the public during the prescribed consultation period.

Council may, from time to time, alter this policy or substitute a new policy. In the instance that any significant changes are being proposed to the public, the council must submit the proposal to a public consultation process.

Other sections of the Local Government Act also refer to consultation requirements, and in some instances set out what a Council must do. See **Specified consultation requirements** below.

Where there are legislative requirements for consultation under other legislation applicable to the council, such as the Development Act 1993, these specific processes take precedence over this policy, should there be any inconsistency.

SPECIFIED CONSULTATION REQUIREMENTS

Under the Local Government Act, Council is required to undertake particular types or levels of consultation (as a minimum) in relation to the following:

- Determining the manner, places and times of its principal office (section 45)
- Adopting or varying a public consultation policy (section 50)
- Altering the Code of Practice relating to the principles, policies and procedures that Council will apply to enable public access to Council and Committee Meetings, their minutes and release of documents (section 92)
- Adopting Strategic Management Plans (section 122)
- Adopting annual business plans and budgets (section 123)
- Excluding land from classification as community land (section 193)
- Revoking the classification as community land (section 194)

- Adopting, amending or revoking a management plan for community land (section 197)
- Amending or revoking a management plan for community land (section 198)
- Alienating of community land where the management plan does not allow it (section 202)
- Alienating roads (section 223)
- Planting vegetation where it will have a significant impact on residents, the proprietors or nearby residents (section 232)
- Proposing to remove trees and road construction projects
- Carrying out representation reviews (section 12(5))
- Considering a change of status of Council or name change (section 13)
- Carrying out commercial activities - Prudential Arrangements (section 48)
- Making Bylaws (section 249)
- Making Orders (section 259)

For details of the specific requirements under these sections, refer to the specified sections of the Local Government Act.

Other consultation and engagement methods may include:

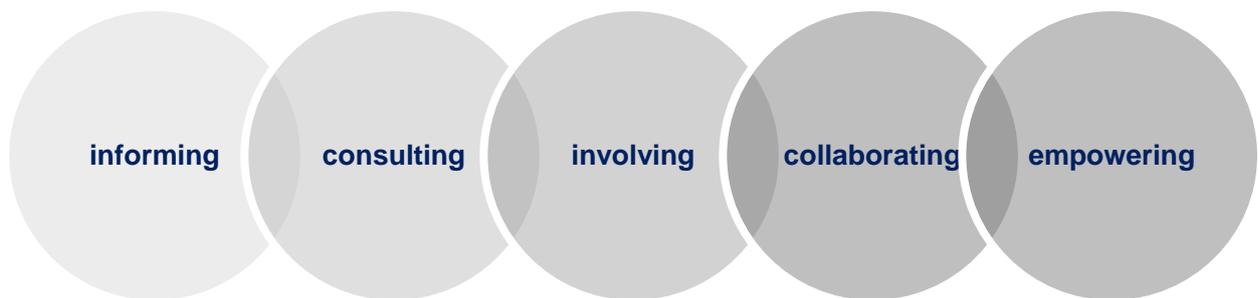
- Publication in a regular newsletter
- Letters to residents and other stakeholders
- Other direct mail publications or letterbox drops, as appropriate
- Advertising in media outlets as deemed appropriate
- Media releases to appropriate media outlets and community groups
- Community forums and stakeholder meetings
- Direct consultation with community representative groups
- Active and passive use of Council's website and social media
- Use of a community email database
- Customer Surveys
- Fixed displays, e.g. community notice boards
- Community group representations to Council workshops

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT FRAMEWORK

What is community engagement?

Community engagement is best described as a planned process that has a specific purpose of working with identified groups of people, whether they are connected by geographic location, special interest or affiliation to address issues affecting their wellbeing. It has become an essential part of planning, policy development and service delivery within councils and their communities.

Community engagement can take many forms and covers a broad range of activities that can include the following:



Core values

Tatiara District Council is committed to engaging with our community. We recognise that community engagement is an inseparable part of our principal role and function as a council (Sect 6 and 7 Local Government Act 1999).

We have a long history of engaging with our community on many matters and have expressed our commitment as a key objective in its Strategic Plan.

In our engagement with our community, we adopt the best practice principles and elements developed by the International Association for Public Participation (IAP2), the preeminent international organisation advancing the practice of public participation (P2). Our Core Values detailed below are based on these principles:

Core Values

1. Our community engagement is based on the belief that those who are affected by a decision have a right to be involved in the decision-making process.
2. Our engagement includes the promise that our community's contribution will influence the decision.
3. Our community engagement promotes sustainable decisions by recognising and communicating the needs and interests of all participants, including community and Council.
4. We will seek out and facilitate the involvement of those potentially affected by or interested in a decision.
5. We will seek input from participants in designing how they participate.
6. We will provide participants with the information they need to participate in a meaningful way.
7. We will communicate to participants how their input affected the decision.

Adapted from: International Association for Public Participation - IAP2 Federation

Principles

Our principles for community engagement

Clarity of Purpose

Clearly define why the engagement is occurring and its context, in order to plan and resource an effective process.

Commitment

Demonstrate commitment to establish and maintain credibility and accountability.

Communication

Establish a two-way process of providing accurate and timely information, and demonstrate that feedback is being valued.

Evidence

Establish good engagement practices that are based on sound research and quality information.

Flexibility & Responsiveness

Establish engagement plans that are flexible during the engagement process e.g. time and venue may change due to natural and/or political environment.

Timeliness

Ensure that participants know how long an engagement process is expected to last and when feedback is expected at each stage of the process.

Inclusive

Ensure that a cross section of the community is invited at the community engagement activity.

Collaboration

Establish partnerships with relevant community groups, state and federal government and/or with internal department/units within Council at an appropriate level.

Continuous Learning

Establish a reporting system to ensure that Council learns from the community engagement activity and is able to monitor and evaluate for future improvements.

International Association for Public Participation - IAP2 Federation/ Brisbane Declaration

The spectrum of public participation

We use the IAP2 Public Participation Spectrum shown below to help define the role of our community in our community engagement processes.

	Inform	Consult	Involve	Collaborate	Empower
Public Participation Goal	To provide the public with balanced and objective information to assist them in understanding the problem, alternatives, opportunities and/or solutions.	To obtain public feedback on analysis, alternatives and/or decisions.	To work directly with the public throughout the process to ensure that public concerns and aspirations are consistently understood and considered.	To partner with the public in each aspect of the decision including the development of alternatives and the identification of the preferred solution.	To place final decision making in the hands of the public.
Promise to the Public	We will keep you informed.	We will keep you informed, listen to and acknowledge concerns and aspirations, and provide feedback on how public input influenced the decision. We will seek your feedback on drafts and proposals.	We will work with you to ensure that your concerns and aspirations are directly reflect in the alternatives developed and provide feedback on how public input influenced the decision.	We will work together with you to formulate solutions and incorporate your advice and recommendations into the decisions to the maximum extent possible.	We will implement what you decide.

The steps we will follow when engaging communities

We engage with our community on a number of different issues: We must consult when it is required by legislation, described in more detail under the **Specified consultation requirements** above.

We also engage:

- To facilitate Community Planning, identify community issues, needs and priorities;
- To undertake our own Strategic Planning;
- About issues that may have potential impacts on the health, safety or well-being of community members;
- To monitor customer satisfaction with our services or facilities;
- About any proposed changes that may impact on current users or customers of a Council service or facility;
- About any proposed changes which may affect the rights or entitlements of community members, including minority groups;
- If there is potential impact on surrounding neighbours;
- If there is a level of controversy or sensitivity about a particular issue;

The following are the basic steps we follow when engaging with or consulting our communities:



The engagement methods we will use

The following shows what engagement method may be appropriate to different Council activities:

Consultation Method	Activities					
	Strategy development	Community planning	Policy development/ implementation	Site/ project specific	Service planning/ review	Legislative requirements
Advertisement in local media	1	1	1	3	1	1
Display in Council offices (Bordertown, Keith, Padthaway Store) & libraries	1	1	1	3	1	1
Council webpage	1	1	1	1	1	1
Facebook	1	1	1	1	1	1
Media release	1	1	1	2	1	2
Letterbox drop	4	3	5	3	5	5
Posters/flyers	4	1	5	3	5	5
Council newsletter	1	1	2	3	2	4
Letter/email	4	3	4	3	3	3
Focus groups	3	3	3	4	3	4
Advisory Committees	3	4	3	4	3	4
Community meetings	2	1	3	3	2	5
Survey	2	2	3	4	2	5
Local Committees	1	1	2	2	1	2
Individual briefings	5	5	5	4	4	5

1	every time
2	in most circumstances
3	may depend on project
4	on some occasions
5	only rarely

AVAILABILITY

This policy will be available for inspection at the Council offices listed below during ordinary business hours and available to be downloaded, free of charge, from the council's website:

- Bordertown Office, 43 Woolshed Street, Bordertown, 5268
- Keith Office 34 Hender Street, Keith, 5267
- Website: www.tatiara.sa.gov.au

RECORD OF AMENDMENT

DATE	REVISION NO	REASON FOR AMENDMENT
2 May 2000	Rev: 00	Draft Copy Only
13 June 2000	Rev: 01	Public Consultation Policy adopted Council Res No 28
14 August 2007	Rev: 02	Policy reviewed and endorsed
11 August 2009	Rev: 03	Policy reviewed and adopted
13 August 2013	Rev: 04	Policy reviewed and adopted
9 July 2019	Rev: 05	Policy reviewed and adopted