



Community Engagement Policy

Local Government Act 2009

1. POLICY STATEMENT

Townsville City Council is committed to ensuring inclusive and effective community engagement to assist in the delivery of high quality local government.

2. PRINCIPLES

The Townsville City Council Community Engagement Policy is based upon the following principles:

- Provision of inclusive opportunities for informed community involvement in council's decision making.
- Ensuring that all groups in the community are provided with opportunities to engage with council, and receive communication on how their input affected the decisions made.
- Commitment to the provision of culturally appropriate processes to encourage increased access by Aboriginal people, Torres Strait Islander people and people from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds to participate in discussions about council initiatives.
- Adherence to an engagement policy and framework that focus upon achieving meaningful community engagement.
- Fostering a council-wide culture of community engagement.

3. SCOPE

This policy applies to all facets of Townsville City Council's activities.

4. RESPONSIBILITY

The Mayor and all councillors are responsible for adhering to this policy in so far as it applies to their activities. Managers and Supervisors are to ensure that this policy is understood and adhered to by all workers.

5. DEFINITIONS

Community Engagement – is an umbrella term used to describe the provision of information, consultation, engagement and empowering activities on a range of policy, program and service issues. Townsville City Council recognises that community engagement goes further than communication and public relations exercises. It involves making connections with the community and enabling opportunities for ordinary, everyday people to be part of the problem solving and decision-making processes that impact their lives and the community in general.

Townsville City Council has adopted the International Association for Public Participation (IAP2) framework which will be applied through the Community Engagement Framework and Tools. Community Engagement will be designed to reflect the appropriate IAP2 levels:

- **Inform:** Providing the public with balanced and objective information to assist them in understanding the situation, circumstances and /or council decisions.
- **Consult:** two-way communications designed to obtain public feedback about ideas or rationale, alternatives and proposals to inform decision making.
- **Involve:** Working directly with the public throughout the process to ensure that public concerns and aspirations are consistently understood and considered.
- **Collaborate:** To partner with the public in each aspect of the decision including the development of alternatives and the identification of the preferred solution.

Community – in this policy refers to the broader Townsville population, and all groups (*communities*) that are part of it. It is important to note that people usually see themselves as belonging to one community of place but more than one community of interest or identity.

They can be:

- **Communities of place**
People living in neighbourhoods and localities
- **Communities of Identity**
People from ethnic minority groups, older people, younger people, people with disabilities, religious groups etc.
- **Communities of interest**
People involved in groups which might cut across other communities. For example boat enthusiasts, public housing tenants, theatre goers etc

Manager – includes persons appointed to positions with the title, Team Manager, General Manager, Principal, Director and Chief.

Workers – includes employees, contractors, volunteers and all others who perform work on behalf of council.

6. POLICY

The Townsville City Council believes that fostering democratic representation, social inclusion and meaningful community engagement greatly assists in the delivery of high quality local government.

The council is committed to achieving inclusive and effective community and internal engagement, and will develop and adhere to a Community Engagement Framework to guide the councils' efforts to enhance the planning and delivery of the councils' services and activities.

7. LEGAL PARAMETERS

Local Government Act 2009

Local Government Regulations 2012

Sustainable Planning Act 2009

Land Protection Act 2002

Water Act 2000

The Disability Discrimination Act 1992

Electronic version current uncontrolled copy valid only at time of printing.

Document No. - 1047

Authorised by – Director Planning and Community Engagement

Document Maintained by – Community Engagement

Version No.4

Initial Date of Adoption (Version 1) – 13.03.07

Current Version Reviewed – 09.11.18

Next Review Date – 09.11.20

Right to Information Act 2009

Information Privacy Act 2009

8. ASSOCIATED DOCUMENTS

Community Plan 2011-2021

Corporate Plan 2014-2019

Operational Plan

Community Engagement Framework

Inclusive Community Policy

Priority Infrastructure Plan

Planning Schemes

IAP2 Spectrum for Public Participation

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