2 Guideline

Guideline title:	Community and Stakeholder Engagement Guideline
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Governing policy:	Community and Stakeholder Engagement Policy 2017
Guideline owner:	Executive Manager Communications, Customer and Cultural Services
Approved by:	Executive Manager Communications, Customer and Cultural Services
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1   Guideline intent

Bayside City Council carries out research and engagement to understand its community and the external influences and environmental challenges it is facing. Where contradictions or conflicting views arise with this planning or delivery, Council has a legislative requirement to ensure decisions are managed fairly and through an equitable consultation process.

This Guideline supports the implementation of Council's Community and Stakeholder Engagement Policy. It will be adjusted from time to time in the spirit of continuous improvement as feedback is received and opportunities to improve practice are identified. It provides community and stakeholders with a framework to predict and understand the likely levels of engagement on projects. It identifies the key areas Council staff consider when planning, implementing and evaluation engagement activities:

- Levels of engagement;
- Supporting participation; and
- Providing feedback to participants and the community.

The objectives of the Guideline are to:

- Create genuine opportunities for members of the Bayside community to participate in community engagement programs about matters that affect them;
- Set out how and when community engagement activities are undertaken by Council based on the IAP2 Spectrum for effective public participation; and
- Encourage a complete process in consultation activities that includes planning, implementation, evaluation and report back to community on outcomes.

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2 Guideline statement

2.1 Levels of engagement

The International Association of Public Participation (IAP2) spectrum identifies five levels of engagement, with the lowest level of engagement being 'Inform', while 'Empower' involves the greatest level of public participation in decision making processes. The IAP2 Spectrum is not a flow chart and there are no steps in the process to progress to the next level. Higher levels are not always better. If an issue is straightforward and less complex, a lower level of engagement may be more appropriate. Whereas complex and controversial issues may benefit from higher level of engagement.

The level of engagement is determined by the goals, time frames, resources and the level of influence community and/or stakeholders have over a project or decision. 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 ultimately rest with the elected Councillors.

Bayside City Council uses the IAP2 Spectrum (Table 1) to plan and implement all of its research and engagement activities. Shown alongside are sample Bayside City Council project examples.

Table 1 – International Association of Public Participation Spectrum 2014

International Association of Public Participation Spectrum			Bayside City Council Project Examples
Level	Objective	Promise	
Inform	Provide the public with balanced and objective information to assist them in understanding the outcome.	We will keep you informed.	Repair to a public road or footpath.
Consult	To obtain public feedback for analysis, alternatives, or decisions.	We will keep you informed, listen to and acknowledge concerns and aspirations, and provide feedback on how public input influenced the decision.	Major policies and plans such as: • Council Plan • Municipal Health and Wellbeing Plan • Annual Budget
Involve	To work directly with the public throughout the process to ensure that public concerns and aspirations are consistently understood and considered.	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.	Structure plans and streetscape masterplans: • Beaumaris Concourse Streetscape Masterplan • Sandringham Village Streetscape Masterplan • Hampton East Structure Plan
Collaborate*	To partner with the public in each aspect of the decision including the development of alternatives and the identification of the preferred solution.	We will work together with you to formulate solutions and incorporate your advice and recommendations into the decisions to the maximum extent possible.	Larger complex projects, with multiple options: • Elsternwick Park (north) Masterplan • Footpath Treatment Policy
Empower*	To place final decision making in the hands of the public.	We will implement what you decide.	• Election of Councillor representatives every four years • Section 86 Committee

* The levels *Collaborate* and *Empower* set the expectation that Council will incorporate advice and recommendations "to the maximum extent possible." Given these levels will be used for complex issues the Council will approve this approach before use.

2.2 Application of the IAP2 Spectrum

It is not always possible to definitively state which level of engagement is appropriate to each and every circumstance. Officer experience, skill and judgement are major factors in identifying the level required. The strategic planning process for engagement is supported by management approval.

Selecting a level of participation does not mean the level cannot change. Through consultation it might be discovered that an issue was more complex or controversial than thought, and so a higher level of engagement might be required.

Choosing the appropriate level of engagement is determined by:
- Level of influence
- Scale and type of project
- Level of complexity.

This is best described by the use of examples in Table 2.

<u>Level of influence</u>
Level of influence describes the effect the community and stakeholders can have on the project or decision.

<u>Scale and type of project</u>
The type of project and scale of change will determine the overall level of interest in the project.

Projects that are place based significantly attract more interest:
- Facilities management and capital investment, the management of Council assets such as parks, sportsgrounds and other community buildings; and
- Planning and environment encompasses works in local streets, traffic planning, parking and environmental strategies.

Projects related to Council service delivery often attract less interest:
- Service delivery comprises of customer service and delivery of Council services (i.e. operations and logistics); and
- Strategic development covers Council strategic plans and policies required under the Local Government Act 1989 (Vic).

Level of change in each of these project types also determines the level of interest:
- Less interest - minor disruption (maintenance or repairs)
- More interest - minor or major service change (removal or addition of a service).

<u>Level of complexity</u>
Complexity is assessed according to perceived community familiarity with the subject matter, the breadth or extent of the proposal or the range of variables to be considered. This element is not as influential to determining the level, rather it is a factor in determining the amount of information the community may require in order to understanding the issue or project.

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Table 2 – Bayside City Council's Application of the IAP2 Spectrum

Level & Engagement Techniques	Level of influence	Scale and type of project	Level of complexity	Sample Projects
Inform: Newsletter Flyer Website item Onsite signage Media Articles Advertising	No ability to influence the decision.	Related to health and safety of community, or immediate risk. Project is part of a prescribed legislation. No alternatives are provided. Routine works or a short term disruption for repair or maintenance.	Low – simple information easily understood.	Repair to a public road, footpath or bike path. Removal of a tree that has been damaged in a storm. Information about a service changes (bin times, payment of rates). Promotion of an event. Community education campaigns.
Consult: Survey (online or phone) Submission (person or online)	Low level of influence, usually a requirement for feedback or more information by Council.	Development of a minor strategy or policy. Minor service change. Project is part of a prescribed legislation. Legislative requirement to engage as part of the project formation.	Low – simple information and few outcome variations.	Council Plan and Annual Budget Upgrading or installing footpaths in-line with Council Policy Planning scheme amendment
Involve: Interviews Workshops Focus Groups	Moderate level of influence, Council and community benefit from an exchange in information.	Development of a major strategy or policy. Change to a service delivery area or use of an asset. Minor service change.	Moderate –complex information, few outcome variations.	Open Space Strategy Improvements to a Bayside wide service e.g. Library Services Upgrade of district or regional facility (playgrounds, pavilions).
Collaborate: Steering, reference or project control groups Citizens Juries	Moderate level of influence, decision making still lies with Council. There are greater opportunities to influence the project through a planned and longer consultation process.	High level policy and strategy with implications for other Council work. Removal of a major service or major change. Change to a service delivery area or use of an asset.	Moderate – complex information and multiple outcome variations.	Bayside Community Plan 2025 Masterplan and Structure Plans Bayside Healthy Ageing Reference Group
Empower: Section 86 Committees Citizens Juries Democratic voting	High level of influence decision making is placed in the hands of the public.	Widespread impact, requiring a municipal wide (representative) involvement.	Low or moderate complexity. Few or multiple outcome variations.	Matters formally delegated by Council through Section 86 Committee Election of Councillors every four years.

2.3   Supporting participation

Effective community engagement requires careful planning and consideration of the stakeholders involved and the type of project being consulted on. It also requires adequate notification and opportunities to participate.

Council will use a variety of channels to inform the community about Council engagement activities and to encourage active participation in these processes. It will promote engagement projects for a minimum of two weeks before a project commences.
The community will be kept informed about Council engagement activities through a variety of including Bayside Leader newspaper and Council's communications channels:

- Let's Talk Bayside
- Website and Have Your Say
- Facebook.

Regardless of the level of consultation, Council will use a variety of community engagement techniques to maximise opportunities for participation. Refer to Appendix 1 to view a list of typical engagement techniques use by Bayside City Council.

2.4   Providing feedback to participants and the community

Council recognises that providing feedback to participants is important in respecting the partnership and maintaining ongoing engagement with the community.
Those who participate in a Council consultation process and provide contact details will be advised when the item will be discussed at Council (where relevant) and/or the outcome.

Community feedback received from large Council engagement processes will be presented to Council as part of the monthly Council Ordinary meetings. These meetings are open to the public and are live streamed from the website. Decisions are recorded in Council minutes. Council information and minutes are published on Council's website.

The feedback will generally include the decision, the process followed and the reasons for the decision.

2.5 Appendix I: Tools and techniques

The following table outlines the typical engagement tools and techniques Council uses to inform its decision making. This information has been taken from the International Association for Public Participation. As outlined previously often more than one technique is used to attract interest and response.

The table also outlines strengths and weaknesses of each technique. Results obtained through engagement activities must be balanced against the relative strengths and weaknesses of both the methodology and the technique used.

Technique	Description	Advantages	Disadvantages
Surveys and questionnaires	A random sample of the population contacted by telephone or post to obtain specific information.	▪ Provides statistically valid quantitative data. ▪ May capture those people who do not attend meetings. ▪ Participants may find it a more comfortable way to share their thoughts.	▪ Many people dislike the invasiveness of phone calls to their home. ▪ Limited capacity to explore complex issues. ▪ Expensive to ensure statistically valid results. ▪ Can get lost in the junk mail/ people screen calls.
Community meetings or forums	Formal meetings often with presentations.	▪ Provides participants with the opportunity to listen and discuss ideas. ▪ Opportunity to hear a range of views.	▪ Requires good facilitation. ▪ Can be difficult to get people to attend unless the issue is of major interest.
Focus groups and workshops	Groups of between five and 20 people to obtain input. Participants learn about the issue and participate in discussion.	▪ Works well for selected target audience. ▪ Guarantees a range of opinions. ▪ Can explore issues in depth.	▪ Needs a skilled facilitator to avoid domination. ▪ Many people are not comfortable speaking out in front of others. ▪ Timing may discourage participation.
Consulting with existing community groups	Small meetings or can be in conjunction with another event.	▪ Opportunity to engage in-depth discussions in a comfortable space. ▪ Access to existing networks. ▪ Can be used to clarify expectations.	▪ Can be narrowly focused. ▪ Special interest groups can be confrontational. ▪ Depends on the extent of networks and relationships.

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Technique	Description	Advantages	Disadvantages
Information Posts	Council stand located in a popular community meeting space (shopping strip, library or school). Often pop up and capture people going about their business.	- Speak to people in their daily life. - If located near the project, can be a good opportunity to talk to the project specifically. - May reach hard to reach groups.	- Often located in busy and noisy locations. - Difficult to speak to people for more than 10 minutes as they go about their business. - Unplanned nature often means participants haven't considered the subject matter.
Online engagement	Internet-based websites seeking input such as Have Your Say.	- May attract people who do not attend meetings. - Allows input from a wider range of the community.	- Unable to control geographical response. - Only accessible to those with the internet.

3   Related documents

Policies	Community Engagement and Stakeholder Policy 2017: DOC/17/101166
Process	Promapp link
Strategies	Council Plan 2021 Wellbeing for All Ages and Abilities Plan Bayside Community Plan 2025

Please note: This guideline is current as at the date of approval. Refer to Council's website (www.bayside.vic.gov.au) or staff intranet to ensure this is the latest version.

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