



COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT POLICY

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Acknowledgements

We acknowledge the Traditional Owners of the land and pay our respects to their Elders, past, present and emerging, and the Elders from other communities who may reside in Moyne Shire.

Community panel

A panel of community representatives provided guidance and recommendations for the initial development of the Policy. We would like to thank the panel members for their time and valued contributions.

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Definitions

What is community engagement?

Community engagement involves using a range of techniques and methods to deliver sound, informed, democratic outcomes for our Shire.

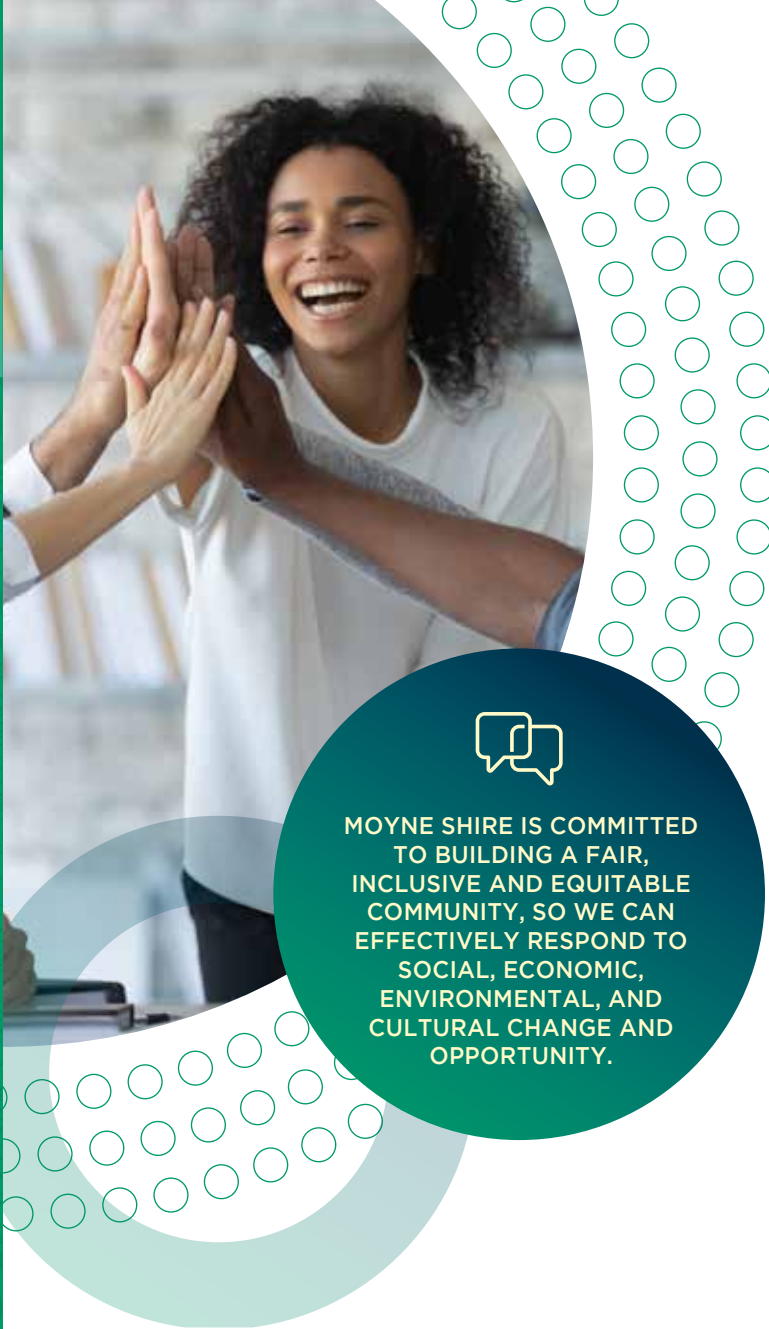
We will deliver engagement that reflects the needs of various communities and provides opportunities to participate in the decisions that we make.

Definitions in the Policy

Moyne Shire Council	Council including Councillors, executive officers, managers, staff, contractors and volunteers
Community	Individuals who live, work, invest or visit our Shire
Stakeholders	Collective residents, agencies, organisations, businesses, associations and government. Also includes Councillors and Council officers
Participation	Provide balanced and objective information and to obtain feedback on analysis, alternatives and / or decisions
Engagement	Two way information flow and includes sharing information within and across community and stakeholders during the decision-making process
Empowerment	Decisions are made between government, community and stakeholders.
Engagement standards	IAP2 is the globally accepted standard we will use for describing and determining levels of engagement, its purpose, goals and methods
Inclusion / inclusive	Enabling a diversity of views and perspectives from all members of the community and ensuring universal accessibility to information wherever possible
Influence / influencing	Negotiables and non-negotiables are clearly identified.
Deliberative engagement	Describes engagement that is more than gaining opinions, and focussed on consideration of issues or topic with access to relevant information and evidence and which seeks multiple points of view



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liveable, and
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MOYNE SHIRE IS COMMITTED TO BUILDING A FAIR, INCLUSIVE AND EQUITABLE COMMUNITY, SO WE CAN EFFECTIVELY RESPOND TO SOCIAL, ECONOMIC, ENVIRONMENTAL, AND CULTURAL CHANGE AND OPPORTUNITY.



COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT POLICY

Introduction

This policy represents our commitment to the Moyne community to the principles that will shape and guide community engagement.

It will be used for our primary strategy and policy, community and asset strategies, budgets, major projects and our approach to talking, listening and working with our communities and stakeholders. This means that the community is included in the conversations we have on the future of our Shire and how we will achieve our goals and ambitions.

Located in South West Victoria, Moyne Shire is home to over 17,000 people who live, work and invest in towns, villages and hamlets across the Shire. The economy is driven by our high quality agribusiness, retail, hospitality and tourism, renewable energy, construction, manufacturing and small business. Major Council strategy such as the Community Vision, Council Plan and Public Health and Wellbeing Plan aim to support social, cultural and economic development to foster a prosperous future and strong communities.

Our Community Engagement Policy supports five fundamental outcomes:

- Engagement is embedded as a community service across the organisation
- Strengthen community representation, influence and trust in decision making
- Our planning and decision making better reflect community goals, needs, values and contributions
- Increased participation diversity and reduced participation barriers
- The community understands our goals, processes and the reasons for our decisions

We value our community and stakeholders' contribution to cultivating a sustainable, confident and connected place to live, work and visit. Residents, business operators, partner agencies and community groups are at the centre of our decision making and have influence on our decisions and community aspirations. We build trust in how we make decisions, and in the decisions that we make.

Context

The *Local Government Act 2020* (“the Act”) requires the review, development and adoption of a Community Engagement Policy which must align to the following engagement principles:

- A community engagement process must have a clearly defined objective and scope
- Participants in community engagement:
 - Must have access to objective, relevant and timely information to inform their participation;
 - Must be representative of the persons and groups affected by the matter that is the subject of the community engagement;
 - Are entitled to reasonable support to enable meaningful and informed engagement; and
 - Are informed of the ways in which the community engagement process will influence Council decision making.

Objectives

The primary objectives of the Community Engagement Policy are to:

- Align to and deliver on the community engagement requirements of the Local Government Act 2020
- Ensure Councillors, Council staff and external contractors and consultants, engage with the community and volunteers in a meaningful way about decisions that affect them
- Provide a consistent and inclusive approach to community engagement so that we gather a range of views and perspectives
- Assist in selecting the method and level to engage the community in projects we undertake or the decisions we make
- Increase trust and community confidence by fostering positive relationships between Council, communities and our partners

Councils must, at a minimum, use the engagement policy and deliberative engagement in the development and review of the following:



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What the Policy will be used for

The policy directs our engagement for Councillors, our staff, contractors and volunteers. External service providers are also included in this community engagement approach to ensure that our engagement commitments are consistently and effectively delivered.

The policy informs Council and the community on how, when and why we will engage, as well as the processes for reporting and feedback. It will also ensure that we meet requirements under a range of legislation that directs our governance, services and strategy.

The policy describes the type and form of community engagement we will regarding the:

- Significance and complexity of the matter
- Impact of an issue or project on community
- Level of involvement of the community
- Resources required for engagement activities.

We will apply the policy to Council's local laws, budget, and other policy development and utilise deliberative engagement practices for the development of the Community Vision, Council Plan, Financial Plan and Asset Plan.

The policy does not apply to community engagement that is subject to prescribed processes imposed by other Victorian legislation, such as land-use planning applications, or other Council processes such as service requests or complaints.



THE POLICY DIRECTS
OUR ENGAGEMENT FOR
COUNCILLORS, OUR STAFF,
CONTRACTORS AND
VOLUNTEERS.



**COMMUNITY
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Major strategy and policy

The Community Vision, Council Plan, Financial Plan, Asset Plan and other key Council strategies and policies require deliberative engagement to be undertaken. The Policy presents how this will be conducted in the examples and processes of deliberative engagement that we will use.

Local strategic and community-based plans

We will develop engagement plans for specific projects or activities that affect our communities. These engagement plans will be undertaken in line with the principles and processes presented in the Policy. Using the IAP2 framework, engagement approaches will be flexible but appropriate to the scale, nature and impact of the project or activity, and will be developed in partnership with community and stakeholders.

Other Council business and activities

Community engagement for other general Council business and services will align to this Policy and its objectives. The Policy will also apply to major projects and partnerships where community input and contributions are critical to decision-making.

Consultation will occur where aspects of our services or processes are negotiable, or where engagement input will add value to strategic decision-making and outcomes.

Other legislation

Consultation and notifications required under other legislation such as the Victorian Planning and Environment Act (1987) will remain in place, but Policy engagement principles will be applied where appropriate.

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Applying the Policy

The Local Government Act specifies that councils must apply the policy to the following strategies and reports (sections of the Act)*

- Development or review of the Community Vision (s 88)*
- Preparation and adoption of the Council Plan (s 90)*
- Development, adoption, and review of the Financial Plan (s 91)*
- Development, adoption, and review of the Asset Plan (s 92)*
- Electoral structure review (s 16)
- Governance rules (s 60)
- Proposing and making a local law (s 73)
- Budget or Revised budget (s 95 & 96)
- Compulsory acquisition of land (s 112)
- Selling, exchange or lease of land (where required under s114 & s115, and not classed as exempt under s116)

*These provisions also include a requirement for deliberative engagement practices – refer to page 14

Matter	Engagement approach
Community Vision	Deliberative engagement ¹
Council Plan	Deliberative engagement
Financial Plan	Deliberative engagement
Asset Plan	Deliberative engagement
Budget	Consultative engagement ²
Making a local law	Consultative engagement
Acquiring or selling land	Consultative engagement
Other statutory and non-statutory plans, strategies or policies, service planning and capital works projects	Level to be selected depending on project complexity and impact of community interest in the matter

¹Please refer to page 14 ²Please refer to page 15



Principles

The following principles underpin our engagement with community and stakeholders to support good governance, strong partnerships and mutual trust and understanding, and link to the principles for engagement presented in the Act.

Principle	Our commitment
Objective	We will listen to ensure community concerns and aspirations are understood and considered and we will work to reduce confusion and misunderstandings and be consistent in our approaches and reporting
Relevant	Information will be made available in a variety of ways to improve accessibility and support meaningful engagement to understand and analyse the problem, and to explore options, opportunities and solutions
Timely	We will give people enough time to participate fully
Representative	We will involve representatives of those who are affected by a process, decision or outcome and create equitable participation opportunities for under-represented groups and individuals
Supportive	We will make it easier for the community to engage with us and be part of our decision-making. People who have special needs or experience social, economic or cultural barriers will be supported.
Meaningful	Our engagement is conscious of the cultural and social context and history of an issue, community, site, project or service
Influence	We will communicate and work with communities on how and what influence the community can have on decisions and outcomes by providing the scope and purpose of engagement and how communities can be participants
Informed	Engagement will be supported with information that is balanced, concise and straightforward and appropriate to the audience and community needs
Inclusive	We will be inclusive and tolerant of a diverse range of views and perspectives to contribute to effective engagement and outcomes.
Reflective	The community will be provided with feedback on outcomes or decisions including how community input and feedback was used
Responsive	We will review and refine our engagement methods and delivery so that we respond to opportunities presented by technology, good practice and community needs

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Who we engage with

Our engagement covers a broad range of community representatives, agencies and individuals.

Without limiting the scope of who we engage with, these can include:

- Residents across the Shire of all ages, backgrounds, abilities, and cultural and ethnic identity
- Business owners and operators who have an interest in our Shire and communities
- Community associations and volunteers who represent diverse social, economic, cultural and environmental interests
- Government agencies which provide services and have statutory obligations or advisory roles that affect our communities and our governance
- Statutory authorities and organisations which deliver and invest in vital services
- Land and asset owners who are partners to Council planning and strategy
- Health, education, not-for-profit, cultural, health and financial institutions
- Non-resident property owners and visitors with an interest in our Shire and communities

Engagement standards

The IAP2 Public Participation Spectrum will be our primary guide to how and when we will engage and the methods we will use.

The Spectrum is an internationally recognised standard for engagement. It informs what type of engagement will be undertaken, its purpose, our commitment to the community, and the range of methods that can be used for each level of engagement.

We will also refer to the requirements and principles of the Victorian Local Government Act 2020 and the Victoria Auditor General's best practice guidance on public participation in decision-making.

The engagement methods we use vary according to what needs to be achieved, the complexity of the issue, the level of participation required to meet goals and objectives, and allocation of resources. Whilst the goal may not always be to engage the community at the empowerment level, we will endeavour to deliver engagement that is fit for purpose.

Very often a mix of engagement methodologies is used for different elements of a project, strategy or engagement process. For example, we may use a survey to gather initial information and then convene workshops to investigate issues presented in more detail. For specific issues that may arise and which require more in-depth contributions and community influence, we would then use deliberative engagement techniques as summarised on the IAP2 framework.

For our major policy and strategy, engagement plans will be developed in partnership with community to ensure our engagement has value and delivers the outcomes required.





Intent	Inform	Consult	Involve	Collaborate	Empowerment
Participation goal	Provide the public with balanced and objective information to assist them in understanding the problem, alternatives, opportunities and/or solutions.	Obtain public feedback on analysis, alternatives and/or decisions.	Work directly with the public throughout the process to ensure that public concerns and aspirations are consistently understood and considered.	Partner with the public in each aspect of the decision including the development of alternatives and the identification of the preferred solution.	Place final decision making in the hands of the public.
Contract with 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.	Work in partnership to ensure that concerns and aspirations are directly reflected in the alternatives developed and provide feedback on how input influenced the decision.	We will look to you for 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 approaches	Media releases Website Social media Mail outs Fact sheets and FAQs Open houses	Surveys Interviews Public comment / submissions Public meetings Listening posts Focus groups	Deliberative engagement methods		
			Workshops and forums Community panels and steering groups Advisory committees Investment logic mapping Co-design activities Priority setting Reporting and feedback		Autonomous reference groups Citizens juries Polling and ballots Deliberative planning panels Delegated committees
Example task	Provide information where there is no or very limited opportunity for community input or influence. Eg: regulatory, statutory, emergency or policy circumstances	Lower impact engagement where community input is needed, for example to refine or provide comment on decisions or processes. Eg: Final Report or Plan submissions, minor service reviews, initial information gathering	Higher impact engagement for more complex or multi-staged projects that have important implications for communities. Eg: Master Plans, Precinct Plans, Structure and land use plans, community asset design plans, annual budget planning,		For projects or opportunities where final decision-making rests in the hands of the community
			Deliberative engagement for major strategy and policy. Must include the Council Vision, Council Plan, Financial Plan, Asset Plan and other key strategies and major policy. Specialist engagement would also be sought for investment business cases, future service provision, complex technical issues		



Designing appropriate engagement

Good engagement practice requires design, preparation and planning and Moyne Shire will utilise the engagement planning framework presented. This directs how we will approach engagement planning and delivery, and key elements that need to be considered or included.

Use of all or some of these elements will reflect the scale, complexity and the nature of the issue or activity and the engagement required. The Policy provides sufficient flexibility to create engagement that is appropriate and fit for purpose.

Complex or larger scale major projects and strategy will include the development of a specific engagement and communication plan that will be designed and tested before we undertake engagement activities.

Good engagement planning is required to help ensure an effective process and outcome and help determine whether deliberative processes are needed or not. This includes identifying the issue and its scope, posing the right question in the right way to focus discussion, providing evidence or expertise in support of debate, and ensuring the process is both timely and given sufficient time.

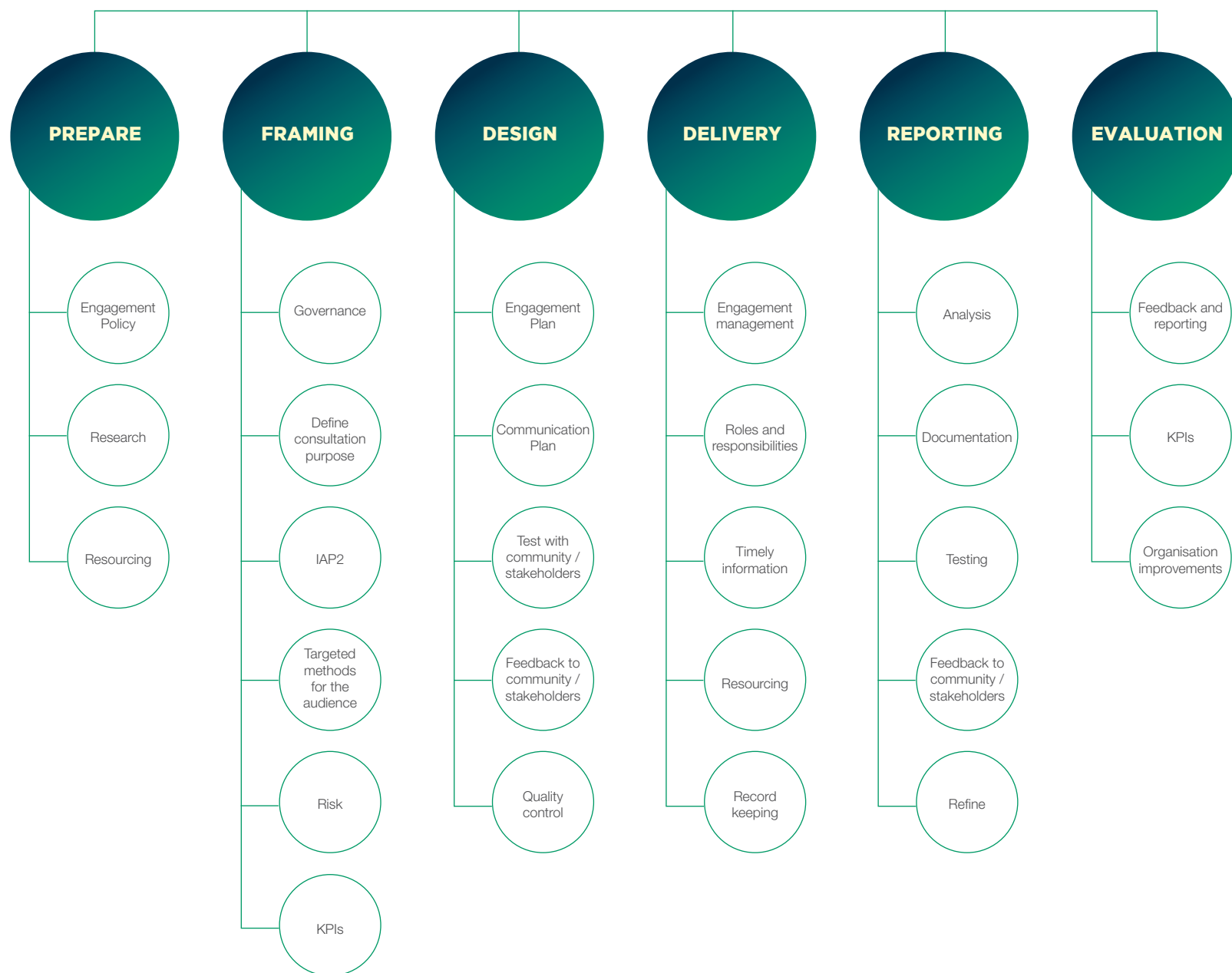
Key to our design approach is building equity in our engagement practices to ensure that under-represented groups and communities have the opportunity to participate and contribute.

The framework will inform how we implement our engagement activities by considering the following:

- Being clear to the community about the purpose, objectives and scope of our engagement
- Refining our engagement methods through testing and review with community and stakeholders
- Identifying who we need to include in engagement activities and adapting our engagement methods to meet their needs
- Broadening our engagement with people who are not easily reached or often heard
- Establishing how we will manage, use and report the information we collect
- Supporting improvement to our engagement process through measuring and evaluation
- Adapting to technological change and opportunities
- How we resource good engagement practices and develop good engagement skills through training and systems
- Ensuring we provide feedback to our community and participants about how we have considered and applied contributions and input



Engagement Framework



Deliberative engagement

Deliberative engagement is a collaborative, informed and enquiring approach. It should enable participants to have influence on decisions by sharing of knowledge, encouraging enquiry and investigating options to inform a decision or outcome.

Deliberative engagement:

- Is always clear in scope
- Involves consideration of an issue through the consideration of timely, relevant, and objective information, enabling Council to gain more than opinions
- Involves participants that represent the diversity of the community and / or stakeholders

Learning and skill development together with deliberation on an issue is central to deliberative engagement. It involves the in-depth exploration of background information or research and allowing sufficient time for issues to be explored and solutions to be worked on.

In a deliberative process communities have a central research and problem solving role, which adds considerable value to the process and outcome. The community is given the resources and time to develop recommendations for consideration by Council.

Community becomes part of the process and results, with the clear aim of building trust and understanding between Council and community.



LEARNING AND SKILL
DEVELOPMENT TOGETHER
WITH DELIBERATION ON
AN ISSUE IS CENTRAL
TO DELIBERATIVE
ENGAGEMENT.





Whilst deliberative engagement can increase expectation on Council to collaborate with the community, the community also carries greater responsibility in the co-design of the strategies, plans and projects.

Deliberative engagement is especially relevant and useful when:

- We need an in-depth understanding of public values and attitudes towards particular issues that will contribute to sound decisions
- The issue, strategy or question is complex, uncertain, may have conflicting solutions or where new or innovative outcomes are desired
- There are strong or polarised views in the community on the best way forward
- Decisions may require some kind of trade-off or compromise that is best arrived at through discussion, co-investigation, and assessment of options and implications
- When a decision clearly needs buy-in from communities and / or stakeholders.
- When we want to hear and understand the citizen's voice.

Like other forms of engagement presented in this Policy, we can use deliberative engagement at specific or multiple points within consultation activities, or it can be applied to specific issues or decisions. It can be used as part of co-design of engagement processes, strategy or policy formation, and for refining an issue or opportunity.

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Consultative engagement

Consultative engagement is part of our engagement approach and is generally regarded as being broad-based community consultation.

For example, it can involve posing a question or presenting a topic, report or opportunity to seek community views. Where possible community is invited to provide evidence or arguments in support of their views or opinions. Decision-makers are not bound by these views, but they should be considered as part of reaching decision outcomes and conclusions.

There are distinct differences between Deliberative and Consultative Engagement and they are summarised in the following table.

Deliberative	Consultative
Aligns to the last three levels of the IAP2 spectrum – Involve, Collaborate, Empower.	Aligns to the first two levels of the IAP2 spectrum – Inform and Consult
Used when community will have a direct influence on the direction, outcome or decisions made	Occurs when feedback is needed on identified options, ideas, directions or documents
Applied to key Council strategy and policy activities or specific strategic issues that have critical implications for the community	Generally to local-scale projects, Council business where Council seeks inputs or feedback and submission to reports or documents
More formal engagement method guided and delivered using specific techniques over a longer-period of time	More informal and flexible in approach, timing and complexity
Seeks direct collective community input to influence and inform decision-making processes and develop recommendations	Seeks broad collective and individual community views and responses
Participants are asked to help identify and frame an issue and/or develop a strategy and recommendations that the organisation commits to deliver.	Decision-makers assess views or opinions on their merits, but they are less obliged to accept or act on them
The promise to the public: We will look to you for advice and informed judgement in formulating solutions and recommendations. We incorporate your advice and recommendations into final decisions to the maximum extent possible.	The promise to the public: We will keep you informed, listen to and acknowledge concerns, and consider them fairly. We provide feedback on how public input was considered.





Feedback

Feedback is an important part of our engagement practices.

We provide feedback to community and participants in engagement activities on:

- The engagement outcomes including reach and inclusion
- How community input was used or influenced a decision
- What engagement improvements have been achieved or should be enhanced
- Other matters where the community tell us they would value feedback.

Feedback mechanisms can be included at specific or across various stages of engagement planning, delivery and evaluation. How and when we will seek and provide feedback will be guided by the IAP2, and as part of developing engagement plans for specific strategies or activities.

Importantly, as part of our engagement planning and design, we will seek community input into the feedback approaches that work best for them.

If our engagement goals are not reached, we will review and refine our resourcing and processes and commit to improving our methods and performance.

Feedback can be sought and provided in a number of ways with some examples given below:

- Media and newsletters
- Fact sheets and Q&As
- “You said – we did” report cards
- Opportunity or options papers
- Correspondence and one-on-one contact
- Council meetings and workshops
- Community presentations and meetings
- Project and activity updates
- Evaluation reports
- Social media and communication apps

Feedback will be incorporated into key engagement activities and results will be reported clearly and be easily accessible.

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REVIEWING OUR
PERFORMANCE WILL
INVOLVE SEEKING
FEEDBACK ON WHERE AND
HOW WE COULD DO THINGS
BETTER AND REPORTING
PERFORMANCE BACK TO
THE COMMUNITY.



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Performance and improvement

It is crucial that Council reviews its performance and delivery of sound engagement practices. In this way we can identify where we are doing well and where we need to make improvements.

Our performance reviews will help us to understand:

- How the community perceives and responds to our engagement activities
- Whether we have achieved our engagement objectives and to what extent
- Where and how our engagement can be improved
- What resources we need and what skills we need to develop

To strengthen our delivery of this policy, engagement skills across our organisation will be developed through training and professional expertise and engagement guides and toolkits.

In partnership with community members, themes have been developed for measuring our engagement to ensure they have value and relevance to the community.

Qualitative and quantitative measures will be applied to the delivery of the Policy and specific measures will also be developed for primary engagement activities.

Performance themes and outcomes

Engagement theme	Policy principles	Measurable outcomes
Participation diversity	Representative Supportive Inclusive	Participation is representative of our communities and residents. Different knowledge and perspectives are shared. Under-represented groups receive an equitable opportunity to participate. Engagement reaches across communities and those affected by a decision.
Fit for purpose	Relevant Timely Informed Meaningful	Satisfaction with the process. Engagement purpose is clear and understood. The context and history is shared and understood.
Informed and transparent	Objective Meaningful Informed Relevant	People with knowledge and expertise are included in our engagement planning and processes. Information to support engagement is consistent, clear, relevant and accessible. Council are responsive to community opinion as to how our engagement is tracking.
Fosters trust and integrity	Objective Representative Influence Inclusive Reflective	People understand how their views will be considered, the reasons for the outcomes and the final decision. People have confidence in Council's engagement processes. People feel they can share and discuss their ideas and opinions. Council builds an engagement culture that reflects the Policy.
Community focussed	Objective Timely Representative Meaningful Inclusive	People and communities are involved early in the engagement process. Engagement is delivered where and when it is accessible by participants. People feel that their views will be heard and responded to. Council provides feedback to participants / community about the outcomes of engagement.
Planned and resourced	Relevant Timely Supportive Responsive	Sufficient resources are available to deliver effective engagement. Council develops and sources the skills needed for open and informed engagement. Engagement is supported by a range of methods and technology. Provide focus on where Council can improve and be more effective.

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Roles and accountability

Whilst oversight, administration and monitoring of the Policy is primarily the responsibility of Moyne Shire Council, its Councillors and staff, we all have a role in the implementation of this policy and effective community engagement.

These roles are varied and include the following:

Community

- › Sharing expertise, knowledge and experience that add value to our planning and decision-making
- › Being open and fair in discussions and engagement and be active participants in engagement activities
- › Become well informed about issues, listen to diverse views and be considerate of others' opinions
- › Providing constructive feedback and track Council's follow through on engagement commitments and decisions

Mayor and Councillors

- › Making informed strategic decisions that reflect the values and input of community as articulated by the community
- › Statutory obligations to adopt and report key policy and strategy and performance as set by the Act
- › Advocating for community priorities and willing to share influence with the community on key strategy, policy and issues
- › Understanding of the key issues and opportunities that are important to our community by being active in our communities across the Shire

Executive Management

- › Providing leadership and advocacy with Councillors and the organisation to implement the Policy and its principles
- › Planning for the resources needed for our community engagement
- › Providing support to community, Councillors and officers to deliver effective engagement and adoption of deliberative engagement
- › Supporting continuous improvement strategies for our engagement through and Policy reviews and community feedback mechanisms

Council managers and officers

- › Embed the Policy across the organisation and how we work
- › Allocating resources to support engagement practices and activities
- › Reporting on engagement outcomes and identifying strategies to improve our engagement
- › Learn, adapt and develop deliberative engagement skills and approaches

Engagement practitioners

- › Provide expert advice to support Council and the community to deliver better engagement processes and outcomes
- › Support the organisation with the skills needed to successfully deliver the Policy
- › Where required, support Council and the community with independent and informed engagement facilitation services
- › Ensure services and support provided are effective and represent value for money for Council and the community



Public notice period

The 2020 Act does not specify public notice periods for community engagement and associated activities.

Please note: this excludes statutory notice periods for land use planning and other statutory engagement requirements.

Wherever possible, Council will aim to apply a minimum of a two week notice period for primary engagement and submission activities. This notice period can be extended based upon:

- The scale and / or complexity of the matter
- The range and / or number of stakeholders that need to be involved or consulted
- The nature and scope of the engagement such as whether:
 - It is a general community-based activity
 - Council is seeking submissions on major strategy or policy
 - Deliberative engagement in being undertaken

Consideration will also be given to community input when it is provided during the engagement design process that proposes extended notice periods.

Notice periods will reflect the scope of engagement based upon the IAP2 Standard.

References

Applicable legislation

- Victorian Local Government Act
- Victorian Planning and Environment Act
- Victorian Public Health and Wellbeing Act
- Victorian Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities Act
- Victorian Privacy and Data Protection Act
- Victorian Public Administration Act
- Victorian Equal Opportunity Act
- Victorian Child Safety Act
- Victorian Road Management Act
- Victorian Commission for Children and Young People Child Safe Standards
- Climate Change Act

Applicable Policy and Procedures

- Complaint Handling Policy
- Councillor Code of Conduct
- Information Privacy Policy
- Public Transparency Policy
- Records Protection and Security Policy
- News and Social Media Policy
- News and Social Media Procedure
- Consultation with Community on Planning Permit Applications for Major Projects which the Minister for Planning is the Responsible Authority
- Community Representatives on Council Committees Policy
- Community Representation on Council Committees Procedure

IAP2 attribution

Moyne Shire Council would like to acknowledge the International Association for Public Participation (**www.iap2.org**) permission for Council to utilise the IAP2 Spectrum of Public Participation, Core Values and Code of Ethics for the purposes of this Policy and its application. For more information please visit **<https://www.iap2.org/page/pillars>**

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