

C106. Community Engagement

Title:	Community Engagement Policy
Policy No:	C106
Keywords:	Citizens, Community, Consultation, Focus Group, Information Panel, Inter-generational, Precincts, Youth
Responsible Officer:	Executive Manager, Corporate Services

1. PURPOSE AND AUTHORITY

Meaningful community engagement is an essential component of Council's core activities enabling it to ensure community focused planning and delivery of key services in the Manly local government area. The policy confirms Council's commitment to community engagement and defines Council's understanding of the term Community Engagement.

This policy represents the first in a two-step process for Council in dealing with community engagement. Once this policy is adopted by Council this policy will be then be complimented by a further more detailed strategy and methodology document which will be forwarded to Council for its consideration and adoption as appropriate.

Ownership of the policy rests with the Executive Manager, Corporate Services who is responsible for its implementation.

2. POLICY STATEMENT

This policy commits Council to an approach whereby Council is to utilise community engagement strategies across the a broad spectrum, being community engagement which informs, consults, involves and collaborates with the local community on issues of a substantive and important nature.

3. PRINCIPLES

Background

Council has a legislative requirement under the *Local Government Act 1993* (the 'Act'), to ensure that community input is a part of the decision making process. Section 8 of the Act refers to councils' charter. Six of the eleven points in the charter require community engagement, namely:

- To provide directly or on behalf of other levels of government, after due consultation, adequate, equitable and appropriate services and facilities for the community and to ensure that those services and facilities are managed efficiently and effectively.
- To exercise community leadership.
- To exercise its functions with due regard for the cultural and linguistic diversity of its community.
- To facilitate the involvement of Councillors, members of the public, users of facilities and services, and council staff in the development, improvement and co-ordination of local government.
- To keep the local community and the State government (and through it, the wider community) informed about its activities.
- To ensure that, in the exercise of its regulatory functions, it acts consistently and without bias, particularly where an activity of the council is affected.

Foreshadowed legislation by the State government will require each council to formally adopt a community engagement strategy.

Guiding Values of the Policy

- Good governance with an emphasis on transparent decision making and fiscal prudence.
- A responsive range of programs, services and facilities meeting community needs.

- A service delivery model that is sustainable, equitable and accessible.
- Clear and specific future works and services programs and planning which deliver on intergenerational equity principles.
- Community engagement so as to ascertain views and aspirations of the local area through innovative feedback strategies, partnerships and precincts.
- A skilled, motivated and accountable workforce empowered to make lawful and effective decisions.
- Custodianship of the indigenous, cultural, natural and built environment on behalf of Manly's future generations.
- A commitment to quality management, best practice, and business excellence principles with a focus on best value outcomes for the community, visitors and local economy.

Aims of the policy

In applying the above mentioned values, Council through this policy aims to:

- communicate its key activities and strategies planned to the broader community;
- provide the broader community the opportunity to provide input to Council on the key strategic directions it should be pursuing for the future;
- gain feedback from the community on its performance over time;
- be informed of the communities view before taking decisions of a major or 'substantive' nature;
- encourage individuals, groups and organisations within the community to seek Council's support in a "partnership sense" for innovative projects and ideas; and
- develop an organisational culture and work practises which will assist the community's capacity to fully engage with Council.

Methods of Community Engagement

Manly Council's community engagement policy is based on the widely accepted International Association for Public Participation Spectrum of Engagement. Council is committed to providing an alternative range of Community Engagement methods whereby the appropriate method will be tailored in consideration of the sector of the community being engaged with and the issue/s topic around which a dialogue is sought. A "mosaic" of approaches will therefore be utilised as outlined in Appendix A.

Roles of Councillors and Staff

The role of Councillors and staff in relation to community engagement activities undertaken by Council should be consistent with the roles specified under the Act. Broadly speaking, the role of Councillors relates to setting policy and strategy and the role of staff relates to the operational aspects of enacting the policy and strategy.

Following on from this approach, the administration of the various strategies outlined in the attachment will be undertaken by Council staff or contractors under the authority of Council's General Manager. However, decision making on the issues and topics on which Council should engage the community will be referred to Council for resolution and direction in particular the engagement methodologies which 'involve' and 'collaborate' with the community (including the Community Panel).

A key direction set in this policy is that Councillors will also receive regular briefing updates via the General Manager on all major consultation strategies undertaken via a monthly reporting process. Also a working group of Councillors can be convened at the will of Council to discuss substantive matters requiring a significant engagement process..

Privacy

Council is committed to protecting the privacy of all participants of any community engagement process. Council's commitment is supported by its privacy management plan which states how Council is to deal with personal information that is stored or received by the Council.

4. SCOPE

This Policy applies to all community engagement activities for all services and businesses operated for and on behalf of Manly Council. This policy applies to Council employees and to consultants engaged by Council.

5. DEFINITIONS

International Association for Public Participation Spectrum of Engagement: Community Engagement:

This Association provides a system designed to assist with the selection of the level of participation that defines the public's role in any community engagement program.

The processes through which the community and other interested parties are informed about and/or invited to contribute, through consultation or involvement, relating to Council services and activities, as appropriate

Community:

People who live, work, visit or invest in the Manly Local Government Area. This includes residents, ratepayers, State and Federal Government Agencies, non-government agencies, the private sector, community organisations and groups, churches, schools and local government partners such as SHOROC and Shorelink.

6. IMPLEMENTATION

This Policy will be implemented without delay once adopted by Council. Upon adoption this Policy will be entered into Council's Policy Register, made available online and provided to all staff.

Council and/or the General Manager may, during a civil emergency only, set aside any policy terms to ensure public safety.

This Policy will be used to assist Council in the development of our Community Strategic Plan document.

7. MONITORING AND BREACHES

Regular monitoring of compliance with this policy, relevant legislation and Manly policies and procedures will be undertaken and documented by the responsible officer for this policy. Breaches of this policy are considered to be breaches of Manly Council's Code of Conduct and therefore invoke the relevant sanctions outlined in that Code. Persons in breach of any legislation may be subject to relevant criminal action.

8. REPORTING

A report will be prepared and submitted quarterly to Corporate Governance on any education or awareness raising activities conducted in relation to this Policy.

9. POLICY REVIEW

This policy is subject to regular review at a maximum interval of two (2) years.

For the purposes of carrying out and giving effect to this policy, the General Manager may from time to time prepare, adopt or vary, and otherwise issue to Council staff, guidelines and directions relating to any aspect of this policy.

Any recognised change to relevant legislation; or directives or guidelines issued by agencies including the NSW Ombudsman and the Division of Local Government; or to Manly Council's related guidelines and procedures will activate an immediate review of this policy to ensure it remains current and aligned to best practice policies.

10. RELEVANT REFERENCES AND LEGISLATION

Local Government Act 1993
Local Government (General) Regulation 2005

Environmental Planning and Assessment Act 1979
Environmental Planning and Assessment Regulation 2000

Crown Lands Act 1989

Roads Act 1993

Privacy and Personal Information Protection Act 1998

International Association for Public Participation Spectrum of Engagement,

<http://www.iap2.org.au/resources/iap2s-public-participation-spectrum>

11. RELEVANT COUNCIL POLICIES

Manly Council Code of Conduct

Manly Council Privacy Management Plan

12. REVISION SCHEDULE

Minute No	Date of Issue	Action	Author	Checked by
	2 April 2009	DRAFT P&S 060409	H Wong	-
	6 April 2009	Adopted by P&S Committee	V Hudson	
	26 June 2009	Added to Policy Register and uploaded on Website	V Hudson	
	26 June 2009	Uploaded on Intranet	V Hudson	
PS53/11	2 May 2011	Periodic Review	Secretariat, Corporate Services	Manager, Administration
	July 2013	Comprehensive Policy Review – moved to standard format and other minor amendments	Manager Corporate Governance	General Counsel
PS16/14	3 March 2014	Periodic Review	OM CSS	Manager Governance

Attachments

Appendix A – Community Engagement Framework

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Mosaic of Techniques

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION GOAL	DESCRIPTION OF GOAL	INTENTION	ENGAGEMENT METHODOLOGY
Inform	To provide the public with balanced and objective information to help them understand a problem, alternatives, opportunities and/or solutions.	We will keep you informed.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Public Notices, • Fact Sheets, • Web sites, • Notification Letters.
Consult	To obtain public feedback on alternatives and/or decisions.	We will keep you informed, listen to and acknowledge your concerns and provide feedback on how public input influenced the decision.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Precinct Community Forums • Community Panels – quantitative polls • Surveys/questionnaires • Public meetings • Public exhibition process • Development Application process • On line comments, participatory blogs, forums and other participatory sites, and Twitter.
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 issues are directly reflected in the alternatives developed and provide feedback on how public input influenced the decision.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Community Panels – including Meetings, Focus Groups, Search Conferences, Deliberative Polls, Citizen’s Juries, Consensus Conferences, and Charrettes • Advisory Committees • User groups • Deliberative polling • On line involvement – Wikis, open blogs, social networks etc.
Collaborate	To partner with people in each aspect of the decision including the development of alternatives and identification of the preferred solution.	We will look to you for direct advice and innovation in formulating solutions and incorporate your advice and recommendations into the decisions to the maximum extent possible.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Meetings with Stakeholders and Partners in the development of the long term Community Strategic Plans • Consensus building • Participatory decision making • Delegated decisions • Joint ventures • Facility Management Committees

Increasing Level of Public Impact

