



Community and Stakeholder Engagement Policy

Date of Issue: Draft March 2020
Date of Last Review:
Date of Last Amendment:
Scheduled Review:

OBJECTIVE

The objectives of this policy are:

- Provide a clear statement of Council's commitment to best-practice community and stakeholder engagement as it applies to decision making
- Define the guiding principles that will ensure appropriate, effective and inclusive community and stakeholder engagement is achieved consistently across the Shire
- Outline the required mechanisms to be established and continually reviewed to ensure best-practice engagement practices are integrated into strategic and operational planning

SCOPE

This policy applies to all Shire of Wongan-Ballidu staff and contractors that manage projects, plans and initiatives that impact stakeholders in our community, as well as consultants appointed to manage these on the Shire's behalf.

This policy applies to the engagement strategies managed through the Shire's traditional methods, and increasingly online engagement as the Shire continues to develop this platform.

This policy is not intended to replace legal and statutory obligations. It should, however, guide business unit specific practices and procedures.

BACKGROUND

The Shire of Wongan-Ballidu is committed to openly and inclusively communicating and engaging with our community to make sure they have the opportunity to participate in decision-making processes that impact them. We recognise that this commitment helps us to help our community, shape the future of the Shire.

The Shire supports public participation as a process to make better decisions. Good decisions incorporate both the interests and concerns of affected stakeholders, and the needs of the Shire. While there are many technical, financial and legislative requirements that the Shire must consider when making decisions, every effort will be made to involve affected stakeholders in the decision-making process.



The Shire has adapted the International Association of Public Participation (IAP2) Core Values to shape our commitment to community and stakeholder engagement. Our approach to engagement will build on these principles and will support the development and implementation of engagement processes consistent with recognised international best practice.

THE PRINCIPLES GUIDING THE SHIRE'S APPROACH TO COMMUNITY AND STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT

1. We believe that those affected by a decision have the right to be involved in the decision-making process
2. We will be clear about how participants' feedback and contributions will influence the decision
3. We believe that the best decisions are the ones that recognise and communicate the needs and interests of both the Shire and the stakeholders in our community
4. We will actively identify those affected by or interested in a decision and make every effort to support and encourage participation in the decision-making process
5. We are committed to providing equal access and inclusion for all members of our diverse community. We will understand the diverse range of needs that stakeholders in our community have and choose the methods of engagement within our means that will best support their participation in the decision-making process
6. We will ensure we give the stakeholders in our community the information they need, at the right time and communicated in the best way to support their understanding, so that they can participate in a meaningful way
7. We will keep the stakeholders in our community updated on the progress and let them know how their input affected the decision

The Shire of Wongan-Ballidu recognises the importance of integrating best practice engagement practices into strategic and operational planning, including business case decision making and project management. We will work towards continual improvement in this area.

WHEN THE SHIRE MAY ENGAGE

Community and stakeholder engagement may occur:

- On developments or changes with potential to impact residents and ratepayers
- When required by Legislative requirements
- To obtain input into long-term and strategic plans of the Shire
- On major projects and strategic issues
- When requested by the community or Council

HOW THE SHIRE MAY ENGAGE

The Shire of Wongan-Ballidu will take a planned and purposeful approach when engaging with stakeholders and the community and will use tools such as the IAP2 Spectrum (Appendix 1) and internal guidelines and frameworks.



Methods will be appropriate to the purpose, level of engagement, resources available and stakeholders impacted.

WHEN FEEDBACK MAY NOT BE SOUGHT

There are some situations when it may not be effective or appropriate to seek feedback from the community and stakeholders, for example when:

- Legal constraints exist (e.g. confidentiality)
- The Shire is required to act in a timeframe which prevents consultation
- The matter is delivering a policy-driven decision where previous engagement with the community and stakeholders has occurred
- A decision has already been made
- The Shire is not the decision-maker and has no ability to influence the decision
- The matter concerns public safety or is an emergency

Where it is determined that seeking feedback will not occur, the Shire will provide clear communication to impacted stakeholders explaining why feedback was not sought.

ENGAGING WITH AND SUPPORTING GOVERNMENT DEPARTMENTS

The Shire of Wongan-Ballidu understands that government agencies such as schools, hospitals and police are fully funded core business units of state and federal government and as such are not a fundamental responsibility of local government. The Shire does, however, believe that we have a social and community responsibility to assist and engage with government departments in a manner congruent with facilitating delivery of services for which we are responsible under legislation.

The manner in which the Shire would offer support to government departments is further prescribed in the Shire of Wongan-Ballidu Council Policy “State Government Department Support”.

The Shire of Wongan-Ballidu recognises that government departments would be considered a stakeholder in numerous Shire projects and initiatives, and as such will be engaged with pursuant to the operationally appropriate level on the engagement spectrum (Appendix 1).

RESPONSIBILITY OF BUSINESS UNITS

Embedding the principles outlined in this policy will be supported by processes and practices based on the IAP2 Quality Assurance Standard For Community and Stakeholder Engagement and the AA1000 Stakeholder Engagement Standard (SES) 2015.

To provide consistency and ensure that the Shire engages at a level considered as being best practice, Community and Stakeholder Engagement Procedures will be developed for Shire issues that require engagement.



These issues include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Strategic Plans, Frameworks etc. (e.g. Community Strategic Plan)
- Scheduled roadworks, right-of-way construction
- Road closures, traffic calming proposals
- Local Laws
- Changes to services (e.g. changes to service provision ie Swimming Pool Operating Hours, closure of services)
- Reactive building maintenance and minor building works
- Public or other building demolitions
- Building upgrades, internal or external building refurbishments
- Playground and park upgrades, replacement and renewal
- Major projects (new regional facilities, parklands etc.)

As a minimum, these Community and Stakeholder Engagement Procedures will include the following areas:

- Legislative requirements, if applicable
- When engagement is to occur
- Situations where feedback may not be sought
- Processes of engagement that will be used
- Minimum requirements for engagement
- How feedback will be used to inform the final decision, and who the decision-maker is
- Method and timing of feedback and communication
- Reporting requirements and format
- How the engagement process will be reviewed and improved on an ongoing basis.

All Community and Stakeholder Engagement Procedures are to be developed within one (1) year of this policy's adoption.

RESOURCES

Several resources have been developed, and will continue to be developed, to assist Shire of Wongan-Ballidu staff to implement this policy.

These include, but are not limited to the operational documents:

- Engagement Plan Template
- Project Plan Template
- Community and Stakeholder Framework
- Community and Stakeholder Procedures



DEFINITIONS

Shire: The Shire of Wongan-Ballidu

Communication: The imparting or exchanging of information by speaking, writing or via another medium, in consideration of the audience and appropriate for the channel delivered through. Communication is about connecting with people by sending information.

Community: Broadly refers to any specific group of people who share a similar location, interest or affiliation within the Shire of Wongan-Ballidu area. These include, but are not limited to residents, ratepayers, business owners and operators, employees, students, visitors and community groups and organisations.

Community and stakeholder engagement: A planned process, which aims to ensure those affected by a decision are given an opportunity to be involved in the decision-making process. It includes a range of activities and strategies to encourage the participation and involvement of all stakeholders.

Community consultation: A subset of community engagement, as defined within the IAP2 Spectrum of Public Participation, it is a level of engagement in which the purpose is to obtain feedback on analysis, alternatives and/or decisions.

IAP2: International Association for Public Participation. The leading professional organisation advancing the practice of public participation globally by promoting the right of those affected by a decision to have a say in the decision-making process, highlighting the benefits of this to organisations, governments and individuals, and providing training programs.

IAP2 Spectrum: Developed by IAP2, the IAP2 Public Participation Spectrum helps to define the community's role in any public participation or engagement process. The spectrum identifies five levels of engagement based on the engagement purpose or goal and the organisation's promise to the public during the process. The spectrum also includes examples of methods or tools suitable for each level.

Program: A group of related projects, subprograms and program activities managed in a coordinated way to obtain benefits not available from managing them individually.

Project: An endeavour undertaken to create a unique product, service or result. Projects have a definite beginning and end, and a desired outcome. Projects could be the development of a product/service, change in business structure or process, delivering information technology, construction of infrastructure or enhancing a business practice/policy.

Public Participation: Is another term used to describe the process of 'community engagement'. Other terms include 'civic engagement', 'citizen engagement', 'public engagement' and 'public involvement'.

Our Vision: The Shire of Wongan Ballidu will be a caring and supportive community driving sustainability of agriculture, services and the environment.



Our Mission: To be leaders in the provision of local government services and infrastructure. - to serve the Shire's diverse community through delivering efficient, responsive and sustainable services.

Our Values: leadership; integrity; teamwork; communication; empathy; professionalism; positivity

Stakeholder: Individuals, groups or organisations interested in, impacted by or in a position to influence the Shire of Wonga-Ballidu's activities or objectives.

Statutory: A legal requirement the Shire must adhere to.

Sustainability Principles: Long-term decision making; fairness for all generations; improving lives and human rights; environmentally and socially responsible development; acting with precaution; conserving the natural environment and biodiversity; minimising the impact of operations, goods and services; accountability, transparency and engagement.

RELEVANT MANAGEMENT PRACTICES/DOCUMENTS

- Disability Access and Inclusion Plan
- Strategic Community Plan
- Customer Service Charter
- Legislation/local law requirements
- WA Local Government Act 1995 and Regulations Health Act 1911 and associated regulations Local Town Planning Scheme
- Planning and Development (Local Planning Schemes) Regulations 2015
- Heritage of WA Act 1990
- Environmental Protection Act 1986
- Bush Fires Act 1954 and associated regulations
- Occupational Health, Safety and Welfare Act 1984 and associated regulations
- Privacy Act 1998
- Disability Services Act 1993
- Equal Opportunity Act 1984

RESPONSIBILITY FOR IMPLEMENTATION

The Chief Executive Officer is responsible for the implementation of this policy.

APPENDIX 1



IAP2 SPECTRUM OF PUBLIC PARTICIPATION – ADAPTED FOR USE BY SHIRE OF WONGAN-BALLIDU

International Association for Public Participation: www.iap2.org

SHIRE OF WONGAN-BALLIDU
Council Policy Manual

	INFORM	CONSULT	INVOLVE	COLLABORATE	EMPOWER
Public participation goal	To provide stakeholders with balanced and objective information to assist them understand the problems, alternatives and/or solutions to enable them to provide meaningful feedback and make informed decisions Nb. Informing happens throughout the process – not only after the final decision has been made	To obtain feedback from stakeholders on options, analysis, alternatives and/or decisions	To work directly with stakeholders throughout the process to ensure that stakeholder issues and concerns are consistently understood and considered	To partner with stakeholders in each aspect of the decision including the development of alternatives and the identification of the preferred solution	To place the final decision-making in the hands of the community or public
Our promise to stakeholders	We will keep you informed	We will keep you informed, listen to and acknowledge concerns and provide feedback on how public input influenced the decision	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	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	We will implement what you decide
Role of stakeholders	Listen	Contribute	Participate	Partner	Decide
Examples of tools and methods	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Corporate website • Social media – Facebook • Wongan-Balli Boomer • Media • Advertising • Email, mail out • Corporate publications • Displays 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Focus groups • Surveys • Public meetings • Ballot • Pop up events • Listening posts 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Vox pops • Focus groups • Workshops 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Citizen advisory/reference committees • Participatory decision-making • Meetings 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Elected member representation • Ballots • Citizen juries • Delegated decisions

