

1.0 SCOPE

- 1.1 The Policy will apply to Councillors, staff, contractors, and agents or consultants acting on behalf of the Council.
- 1.2 The Policy provides a structured process for publicly canvassing issues that Council identifies as important to the community and/or having potential to significantly impact the community.
- 1.3 The Policy is not intended to impede Council's decision-making processes.

2.0 PURPOSE

- 2.1 The purpose of this Policy is to outline the principles and procedures that the Council will follow to involve the community in planning and decision-making in the local area, and to ensure accountability of the Council to the community through effective communication and consultation strategies.
- 2.2 The implementation of this Policy is not to replace existing avenues for community involvement or input but is designed to complement them.
- 2.3 The objectives of this Policy are:
 - (a) To promote positive relations between the Council and the community;
 - (b) To promote effective communication and consultation between the Council and the community;
 - (c) To enable the community to participate in Council planning and decision making;
 - (d) To provide the framework for community involvement in Council planning and decision making;
 - (e) To promote Council decision-making that is open, transparent, responsive and accountable to the community.

3.0 POLICY STATEMENT

- 3.1 Waratah-Wynyard Council ('Council') is committed to open, accountable and responsive decision making, which is informed by effective communication and consultation between the Council and the community.
- 3.2 This Public Consultation Policy ('Policy') sets out the steps the Council will take for the purpose of establishing partnerships and encouraging community involvement in planning and decision making about the services the Council provides and the management of community resources.
- 3.3 The Policy addresses the key elements of both communication and consultation. Communication involves providing meaningful information in a timely and accessible manner. Consultation is a two-way process, providing opportunities to clarify information, raise issues and discuss ideas, options and views.

4.0 PRINCIPLES

- 4.1 The Policy is underpinned by the following principles, which the Council believes are central to achieve effective communication and consultation:
- (a) Council decision-making should be open, transparent and accountable;
 - (b) Council will identify potential stakeholders in each specific circumstance;
 - (c) Council will ensure information is easily understood and accessible to identified stakeholders, and include contact details for obtaining further information in all communications;
 - (d) The community has a right to be involved in and informed about key decisions affecting them;
 - (e) A range of appropriate opportunities will be provided for people to access information and to be involved, taking into account the diversity of the community and their differing communication needs;
 - (f) Council will listen and respond to community views in a balanced way, taking account of all submissions made by various stakeholders;
 - (g) Council's desire to balance community views and interests with other influences such as budgetary constraints;
 - (h) Council's communication and engagement strategies are underpinned by the International Association of Public Participation (IAP2) Spectrum, which provides a best-practice framework outlining the various levels of engagement (inform, consult, involve, collaborate and empower) and the associated communication tools and appropriate audience messages for each level of engagement.

5.0 COMMUNICATION AND CONSULTATION STRATEGIES

- 5.1 In implementing this Policy, Council will consider the views and aspirations expressed by the community and stakeholders and will balance those within the context of Council's Communication and Engagement Strategy, Annual Plan and Budget and other endorsed strategic directions.
- 5.2 Options that the Council may choose to utilise to communicate information and invite submissions, include, but are not limited to:
- (a) Newsletters;
 - (b) Advertisements in local media;
 - (c) Media releases/editorial;
 - (d) Fact sheets or brochures;
 - (e) Letters addressed directly to stakeholders;
 - (f) Letterbox drops;
 - (g) Website;
 - (h) Social media;
 - (i) Notices in public places.
- 5.3 Council may choose to consult with the community using methods such as:
- (a) Meetings with Councillors and staff;
 - (b) Council Advisory Committees;

- (c) Focus groups;
- (d) Workshops for stakeholders;
- (e) Surveys;
- (f) Door knocks;
- (g) Open days;
- (h) Listening Posts;
- (i) Community forums;
- (j) Have Your Say - website;
- (k) Social media.

5.4 Any steps taken by the Council in addition to the minimum requirements set out in this Policy are at the absolute discretion of the Council and will depend upon the particular matter under consideration, the resources available to the Council and the level of interest the matter is likely to generate. Each opportunity to engage with the public will be assessed against the IAP2 Spectrum to determine the level of consultation required.

5.5 The Council will record and provide feedback about the decisions where relevant.

Legislative Requirements:

Section 20 of the *Local Government Act 1993* provides as follows:

Functions and powers of councils

- 20. (1)** *In addition to any functions of a council in this or any other Act, a council has the following functions:*
- (a) *to provide for the health, safety and welfare of the community;*
 - (b) *to represent and promote the interests of the community;*
 - (c) *to provide for the peace, order and good government of the municipal area.*
- (2)** *In performing its functions, a council is to consult, involve and be accountable to the community.*
- (3)** *A council may do anything necessary or convenient to perform its functions either within or outside its municipal area.*

Related Procedures/Guidelines:

Waratah-Wynyard Council - Communications and Engagement Strategy