



POLICY NO	CP GOV-3100	
POLICY	Community Engagement Policy	
RESPONSIBLE DIRECTORATE	Community Development	
RESPONSIBLE OFFICER	Community Development Officer	
COUNCIL ADOPTION	Date: 20/09/2011	Resolution No: 9575
REVIEWED/MODIFIED	Date: 19/02/2013	Resolution No: 9998
	Date: 16/12/2014	Resolution No: 10732
	Date: 30/08/2016	Resolution No: 11463
REVIEW DUE	Date: August 2017	
LEGISLATION	<i>Local Government (Administration) Regulations 1996</i>	
RELATED POLICIES		
RELATED ORGANISATIONAL DIRECTIVES	Community Engagement Guidelines	

PURPOSE:

The purpose of this policy is to outline the principles for all community engagement activities conducted by the Shire of Wyndham East Kimberley.

- To utilise community input to assist in making more informed and sustainable decisions;
- To use engagement methods that are inclusive, flexible, and appropriate to those participating and the purpose of the process

DEFINITIONS:

Stakeholder is any individual, group of individuals, or organisation with an interest or stake in the outcome of the decision.

Community Engagement or Public Participation is any process that involves the community in problem-solving or decision-making and that uses the input to make better decisions. This does not necessarily mean achieving consensus.

IAP2 is the International Association of Public Participation.

POLICY STATEMENTS:

Governments and industry across the globe are increasingly recognising the value of community and stakeholder engagement as an essential part of significant project planning and decision-making. It is now an accepted standard component of any significant project which facilitates community involvement in decision making.

The outcomes and benefits of effective community engagement include:

- Increased community awareness about services, planning and program delivery;
- Increased awareness of community views and the issues that should be considered as part of the decision-making process;

- Increased awareness of the needs, priorities and diversity of the community, which in turn ensures that service provision and planning functions are aligned appropriately;
- Increased levels of community ownership and acceptance of decisions;
- Council and the community working together to address local issues where appropriate;
- Potential for time, resources and cost savings for the Shire.

The Shire’s approach to community engagement is based on the International Association of Public Participation’s (IAP2) Spectrum. The level of engagement should be determined by considering the issue, problem or opportunity requiring community engagement, the objectives to be achieved by engaging and the extent that the community can assist Council to make decisions. The policy is supported by Community Engagement Guidelines that provide clarity on when it is appropriate to engage, and at what level.

The IAP2 Public Participation Spectrum:

	Inform	Consult	Involve	Collaborate	Empower
Community Participation Goal	To provide the public with balanced and objective information to assist them in understanding the problems, alternatives and/or solutions.	To provide the public feedback on analysis, alternatives and/or decisions.	To work directly with the public throughout the process to ensure that public concerns and aspirations are consistently understood and considered.	To partner with the public in each aspect of the decision including the development of alternatives and the identification of the preferred solution.	To place final decision-making in the hands of the public.
Promise to the Community	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. We will seek your feedback on drafts and proposals.	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	We will work together with you to formulate solutions and incorporate your advice and recommendations into the decisions to the maximum extent possible.	We will implement what you decide
Example Techniques	Fact sheets Websites Open Houses	Public Comment Focus Groups Surveys	Workshops Deliberative Polling	Advisory Committees Consensus Building Participatory Decision –making	Citizen Juries Ballots Delegated Decision

This policy will apply to Councillors and Shire staff. It also applies to contract workers, consultants and tenderers who are undertaking community engagement on behalf of the Shire.

For community engagement to be effective and of the highest quality, the Shire will adhere to the below IAP2 Core Values:

1. Public participation is based on the belief that those who are affected by a decision have a right to be involved in the decision-making process.
2. Public participation includes the promise that the public’s contribution will influence the decision.
3. Public participation promotes sustainable decisions by recognising and communicating the needs and interests of all participants, including decision makers.
4. Public participation seeks out and facilitates the participants in designing how they participate.

5. Public participation provides participants with the information they need to participate in a meaningful way.
6. Public participation communicates to participants how their input affected the decision.

EXPLANATORY NOTES:

The Shire's approach to community engagement will reflect the below principles as set out in the IAP2 Code of Ethics. They represent Shire's best practice approach in community engagement.

Purpose – We support public participation as a process to make better decisions that incorporate the interests and concerns of all affected stakeholders and meet the needs of the decision-making body

Role of Practitioner - We will enhance the public's participation in the decision-making process and assist decision-makers in being responsive to the public's concerns and suggestions.

Trust - We will undertake and encourage actions that build trust and credibility for the process among all the participants.

Defining the Public's Role - We will carefully consider and accurately portray the public's role in the decision-making process.

Openness - We will encourage the disclosure of all information relevant to the public's understanding and evaluation of a decision.

Access to the Process - We will ensure that stakeholders have fair and equal access to the public participation process and the opportunity to influence decisions.

Respect for Communities – We will avoid strategies that risk polarising community interest or that appear to “divide and conquer”.

Advocacy – We will advocate for the public participation process and will not advocate for interest, party, or project outcome.

Commitments – We ensure that all commitments made to the public, including those by the decision-maker, are made in good faith.

Support of the Practice – We will mentor new practitioners in the field and educate decision-makers and the public about the value and use of public participation.

RISK:

Risk: Poor communication of Shire issues to the community

Control: The Shire's best practice will ensure that the community is notified of the level of community engagement that will be required within the decision-making process and why this was chosen.