

Policy 6.16 Community Engagement

Directorate	Community, Environment and Planning Business and Governance
Responsible Officer	Director, Community Environment and Planning Director, Business and Governance

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1.1 Introduction

Community engagement is the active link between Council and the community to enable community input to inform solutions. Community engagement is achieved when the community is and feels part of a process. While community engagement does not replace the decision-making powers of elected Councillors or the Chief Executive Officer, it does enhance the capacity of Council to make well-informed, sustainable decisions that clearly demonstrate community buy-in and support.

Commented [KD1]: This inclusion is from the IPR&R guidelines in relation to community engagement.

1.1.1 Scope

This policy prescribes the processes implemented to facilitate and enhance the level of participation and satisfaction with Bega Valley Shire Council's community engagement practices across the shire.

The scope of this policy demonstrates direct commitment to the following strategic guiding principles:

- Equitable and inclusive | commitment to building connection with stakeholders and build trust and respect
- Responsive | timely and accurate sharing of information
- Transparent | open in decision-making process and updating of progress
- Accountable | proactive consultation and engagement.

1.1.2 Purpose

- To outline Council's commitment to engage with the community in a respectful, effective and transparent manner.
- To better understand, value and include the views of the community in Council's decision making.

1.2 Definitions

Word or Terminology	Description
Community engagement	The range of opportunities for community involvement in Council decision making, relationship building and community strengthening

1.3 Legislation

Local Government Amendment (Planning and Reporting) Act 2009
Local Government Act 1993
Environment Planning and Assessment Act 1979
Local Government (General) Regulation 2021

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1.4 Implementation

1.4.1 Policy statement

Bega Valley Shire Council will engage with the community by:

- providing the community with consistent, meaningful opportunities to participate in, and contribute to, Council decisions
- aligning Council's engagement processes to reflect the adopted values of the organisation
- using a range of engagement strategies to enable all members of the community who are affected by, or interested in, a decision to have the opportunity to contribute
- providing relevant and timely information about the planning, implementation and management of Council programs, services and facilities
- ensuring engagement strategies are accessible and culturally appropriate
- meeting or exceeding all statutory advertising and public exhibition periods for Council related matters
- closing the loop by reporting back to the community on how their input is used in decision making and how community involvement shapes our actions-
- Council ~~will reviewing~~ community engagement ~~activities on an~~ ongoing ~~manner basis~~ to ensure they are accessible, effective and meet the intended goals-

The level of community input will be determined by the decision to be made and guided by the International Association for Public Participation, Spectrum (IAP2) ~~IAP2~~ model of engagement:

- **Informing**
To provide the community with balanced and objective information to assist them help them in understanding ~~the a~~ problem, alternatives, opportunities and/or solutions
- **Consulting**
To obtain community feedback on alternatives and/or decisions
- **Involving**
To work directly with the community throughout a process to ensure that public concerns and aspirations are consistently understood and considered
- **Collaborating**
To partner with the community in each aspect of the decision ~~making process~~ including the development of alternatives and identification of the preferred solution
- **Empowering**
~~To offer advice and provide tools that help the community to lead initiatives that align with Council's adopted Community Strategic Plan~~
To place final decision making in the hands of the community.

1.4.2 Responsibilities

1.4.2.1 Elected Council

All Council reports have a community engagement section to ensure the elected Council is aware of community feedback prior to making a decision.

1.4.2.2 Chief Executive Officer (CEO), Leadership Executive Group (LEG)

Ensure that Council's engagement processes reflect the adopted values of the organisation.

1.4.2.3 All Directorates

Ensure Council meets or exceeds all statutory advertising and public exhibition periods for Council related matters, and ensure all engagement is undertaken in accordance with the Community Engagement Strategy.

Under Review

1.5 Supporting documents

1.5.1 BVSC procedures that relate to this policy

Procedure No.:	Procedure Name	External or Internal Procedure
	There are no procedures sitting under this policy	

1.5.2 BVSC policies that relate to this policy

Policy No.:	Policy Name
6.10	Communications
6.25	Social Media
6.11	Records Management
6.12	Access to Information
6.13	Organisational Service Standards

1.5.3 Other related documents

Bega Valley Shire Council [2024-28](#) Community Engagement Strategy ~~2019~~

Note: Policy details may change from time to time. To ensure you are viewing the most recent version please view Council's adopted Policies and Procedures on Council's website: www.begavalley.nsw.gov.au