



# CABONNE COUNCIL STRATEGIC POLICY

## COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

### 1. Document Information

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<b>Owner</b> <i>(Relevant Executive)</i>	General Manager
<b>Status</b> <i>(Draft, Approved, Adopted by Council, Superseded, or Withdrawn)</i>	Adopted by Council
<b>Next Review Date</b>	Within 12 months following each Council election
<b>Minute Number</b> <i>(once adopted by Council)</i>	21/02/10

### 2. Summary

Cabonne Council is committed to ongoing community engagement to inform its decision-making. Robust community engagement ensures Council's policies, priorities, planning and resource allocation reflects the community's needs and expectations.

Council's community engagement objective is to enable open, inclusive, easy, relevant, timely and meaningful community participation across a range of planning and prioritisation activities, except routine administrative matters.

### 3. History

*Unless otherwise indicated, printed or downloaded versions of this document are uncontrolled. Before using this document, check it is the latest version by referring to Council's Policy Register at [www.cabonne.nsw.gov.au](http://www.cabonne.nsw.gov.au)*

Minute Number	Summary of Changes	New Version Date
21/02/10	Adopted by Council	23/02/2021

## 4. Reason

The NSW *Local Government Act 1993* requires councils to establish a Community Engagement Strategy to help inform the development of councils' plans, policies and programs, as well as to make decisions about prioritisation and resources allocation when councils determine their activities (other than routine administrative matters). This Policy identifies the underpinning principles that support Council's engagement activities.

## 5. Scope

This Policy applies to all of Council's community and other stakeholder engagement activities, and complements Council's Community Participation Plan [*insert hyperlink*] which focuses on opportunities for the community's participation in the land-use planning system.

All staff, councillors, consultants and contractors undertaking community engagement activities on behalf of Council shall abide by this Policy.

## 6. Associated Legislation

NSW *Local Government Act 1993*

NSW *Local Government Amendment (Governance and Planning) Act 2016*

NSW *Environmental Planning and Assessment Act 1979*

NSW *Privacy and Personal Information Protection Act 1998*

## 7. Definitions

Community

'Community' refers to anyone who has a stake or an interest in the Cabonne Council region and its future. This includes, but is not limited to:

- People who live, work, own property or conduct business in our Council area, or who visit use or enjoy the services, facilities and public places located across our region.
- Government and non-government agencies, community groups, business and industry groups, and other organisations or associations related to the region.

Engagement

'Engagement' is a conversation between Council and the community that provides Council with information that helps to inform better decisions.

Engagement allows Council to benefit from local knowledge and to create shared visions, understandings and solutions to address community issues.

The level of engagement undertaken by Council will be dependent on the matter at hand, and will be determined in line with this Policy and Council's Community Engagement Guidelines [*insert hyperlink when available*].

Method/s of engagement

Each engagement activity will be designed to ask and answer questions specific to the matter at hand. This will determine how, when and who Council will engage.

Council will strive to ensure that those in the community most likely to be affected by a decision or have an interest in the outcome of a decision are provided an opportunity to participate.

In determining the best method of engagement, Council will consider the timing and duration of activities, cultural sensitivities, and issues of access and equity.

## 8. Responsibilities

- 8.1**      **General Manager:** is responsible for approving those engagement activities that have an organisation-wide impact, and/or where councillors will be utilised in the engagement activities.
- 8.2**      **Deputy General Managers:** are responsible for approving engagement project plans developed by their Leaders in advance of the commencement of engagement activities.
- 8.3**      **Leader Community and Economy:** is responsible for oversight of community engagement activities of Council, and to provide support and advice to staff undertaking community engagement on behalf of Council. Staff will be required to advise the Leader Community and Economy of their proposed engagement activities to enable coordination of activities.

**8.4** **Leaders:** are responsible for identifying those decisions, planning activities and processes which will have community impacts and therefore require a community engagement activity. The Leader will prepare an engagement project plan to identify how the community engagement activity will be rolled out, what question/s the engagement is seeking to answer, and when it will be undertaken. Leaders will ensure that planned engagement activities are discussed in advance with the Leader Community and Economy, so that all the engagement activities of Council can be undertaken in a coordinated fashion, and engagement support can be planned for team members who will be undertaking the engagement.

**8.5** **Employees:** are responsible for familiarising themselves with this Policy and Council's Community Engagement Guidelines before participating in any community engagement activities on behalf of Council. Employees are responsible for discussing with their Leader programs, planning processes or other activities they are undertaking which are likely to have community impacts, and therefore require a community engagement element.

**8.6** **Others:** Council contractors and consultants who undertake projects or programs on behalf of Council which have community impacts must liaise with the designated Council Officer to ensure that community engagement requirements are met.

## 9. Related Documents

Document Name	Document Location
Community Engagement Guidelines	[on website when available]
Community Engagement project plans for individual engagement activities	In Council's document management system
Cabonne Community Participation Plan	On the <a href="#">Local Environment Plan page</a> of Council's website

## 10. Policy Statement

Cabonne Council will engage with the community in an effective, timely and transparent manner to foster collaboration, cooperation and increased understanding of issues that affect the community, and to ensure that community views are considered in the decision-making processes of Council.

Council recognises that the level and extent of engagement must vary according to the nature, complexity and level of impact of the matter under consideration. The community engagement activities that Council undertakes will be guided by the level of community impact the matter is likely to have.

This Policy outlines the principles that will guide the planning, design, implementation and evaluation of community engagement undertaken by Council. The Policy emphasises that the community will be informed during any engagement process and will receive feedback on the outcomes.

This Policy underpins the community engagement guidance provided in Council's Community Engagement Guidelines, and will be referred to during the development of individual engagement project plans as they are developed to inform specific decisions and processes of Council.

### Policy principles

Cabonne Council acknowledges its obligations under the Local Government Act 1993 as they relate to consultation, participation and engagement. Council's community engagement is based on the five-point framework developed by the International Association for Public Participation (IAP2):

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|--------------------|---|
| <b>Inform</b>      | To provide the community with balanced and objective information to assist community members in understanding the issues, alternatives, benefits and/or solutions.  |
| <b>Consult</b>     | To obtain community feedback on options, projects and/or designs.   |
| <b>Involve</b>     | To work directly with the community throughout the decision-making process to ensure that community concerns and aspirations are consistently understood and considered.  |
| <b>Collaborate</b> | To partner with community members in some or all aspects of the decision-making process, including the development of options and the identification of the preferred solution.   |
| <b>Empower</b>     | Where Council works in partnership with the community to implement actions and build community capacity.<br>( <i>Note: in the local government context elected representatives are responsible for making the final decision, but this decision is informed based on the outcomes of the community engagement activities</i> ). |