

Shoalhaven
City Council

Community Engagement Strategy and Framework

2024 - 28



Acknowledgement of Country

Walawaani (welcome),

Shoalhaven City Council recognises the First Peoples of the Shoalhaven and their ongoing connection to culture and country. We acknowledge Aboriginal people as the Traditional Owners, Custodians and Lore Keepers of the world's oldest living culture and pay respects to their Elders past, present and emerging.

Walawaani njindiwan (safe journey to you all)

This acknowledgment includes Dhurga language. We recognise and understand that there are many diverse languages spoken within the Shoalhaven.



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Message from the Mayor

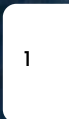
Community engagement and participation provides the foundation of our planning and decision-making process. It supports the development of policies, projects and services that reflect the values of local communities as well as sharing information and building trust with Council.

The Community Engagement Strategy and Framework provides the direction for all our community engagement activities and helps to determine how, when and with whom we engage. It sets out the organisation's structured approach to consultation and guides the planning of engagement activities to effectively involve community members. We value our communities and are committed to working collaboratively and transparently with residents to ensure we achieve balanced outcomes that reflect the wishes of all stakeholders across the Shoalhaven.

I am a passionate advocate for the community and believe strongly in ensuring they continue to have a voice in Council matters. I am delighted to present this strategy and look forward to working with my colleagues to see it implemented over the next four years.

Patricia White

Mayor, Shoalhaven



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What is Community *Engagement*?

Community engagement, also known as public participation, is ensuring that the whole of community, is informed about matters affecting them and are provided with equal opportunities to provide feedback and inform decision making through consultation, participation and collaboration.



Why community engagement matters

- Allows the community to influence decisions that directly affect them.
- Helps Council make informed decisions based on the community's views and values.
- Builds shared ownership and accountability between Council and the community for decisions made.

What is the purpose of a Community Engagement Strategy?

- Provides direction for all our community engagement activities.
- Outlines who, when and how we will engage.
- Drives a coordinated, purposeful and effective community engagement approach.
- Ensures we deliver balanced outcomes that meet the needs of all stakeholders, whether they are impacted or simply interested.

What is the framework for?

- Details our strategy for engagement during projects and initiatives.
- Establishes a consistent approach and sets a standard for engagement activities.
- Defines stakeholder roles in Council's decision-making process.



Why do we need a Community Engagement Strategy?

Council is required to comply with various legislative requirements that determine when and how we should consult with the community.

Local Government Act 1993

Section 402 – Community Strategic Plan

Each local government area must have a Community Strategic Plan (CSP) that has been developed and approved by the Council. The CSP should reflect the community’s main goals and ambitions for the future and look at least 10 years ahead.

Section 402A – Community Engagement Strategy

A council needs to create and follow a strategy (called its Community Engagement Strategy) to involve local people when developing its plans, policies, and programs. This is to help decide what actions it should take, except for routine administration tasks.

Section 406 – Integrated planning and reporting guidelines

Guidelines are set for Council to plan and report its activities in a coordinated way. They provide specific requirements for the preparation, development, consultation on and review of the contents for such documents as the Community Strategic Plan, Resourcing Strategy, Delivery Program, Operational Plan, Community Engagement Strategy, Annual Report and environmental reporting of a council.

Environmental Planning and Assessment Act 1979

Division 2.6 – Community participation

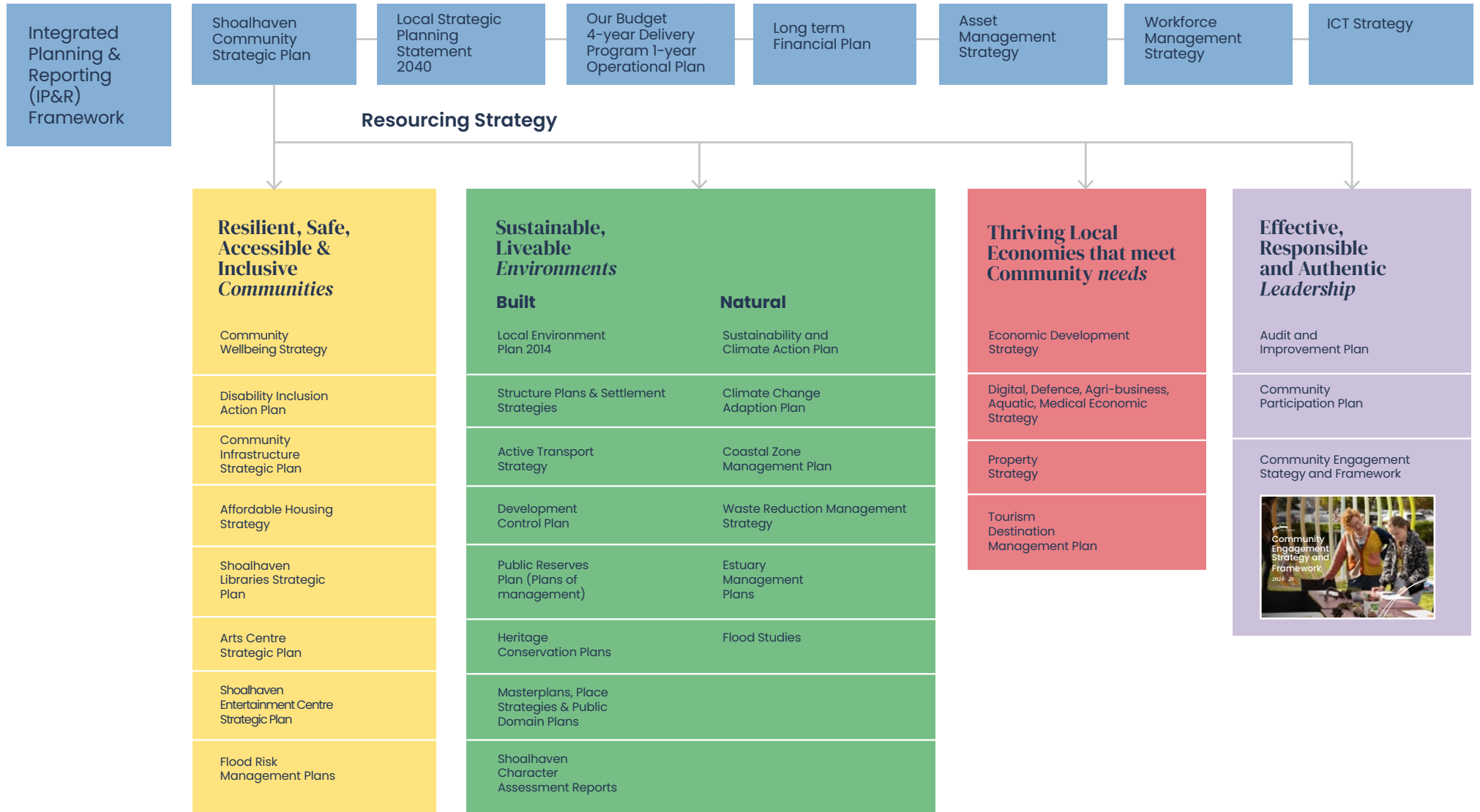
Every planning group, like the Council, must involve the community when creating policies and evaluating them. This involves showing plans to the public for a certain amount of time, notifying the community about the plans, and explaining the reason behind any decisions.

In line with legislative requirements, Council has developed a Community Participation Plan that provides information on its development application (DA) notification requirements and community participation in other planning matters.





Council's strategic documents





This strategy and framework directly address community focus areas and strategies outlined in the Shoalhaven 2032 Community Strategic Plan.



Key Priority

- Inform and engage with the community about the decisions that affect their lives



Focus Areas

- Provide opportunities for the community to have genuine engagement on Council planning and decision making
- Provide clear, consistent, relevant and accessible information to the community



Delivery

- Provide engagement opportunities for the community both online and face to face
- Explain to our local community the impacts of strategic planning as required by legislation and ensure appropriate consultation is undertaken and information is available
- Continuous improvement of Council's website, social media and media content





How we developed the *framework*

This strategy and framework are informed by feedback from the community and Council workers.



Community Feedback

In March to May 2024, we engaged with more than 500 local community members through the following engagement activities:

- Face-to-face community pop-up kiosks
- An online and hard copy survey
- Workshops with Advisory Committees and Community Consultative Bodies
- Presentation to local community groups

This document also incorporates feedback received during consultation for the Community Engagement Strategy that related directly to a framework.



Input of Council representatives

A team of Council employees who frequently interact with the community and are passionate about community engagement offered insights and feedback on both current and future community engagement priorities and requirements.

Suggestions made by Councillors as part of this project have been incorporated and form part of the reasoning for some aspects including the need to report back and accessibility.



What we *heard*

"Host meetings in family friendly spaces"

"Regular catchups as people prefer a less formal approach"

"Select meeting times young people are likely to attend"

"Engage with us early in the process, not at the end"

"Community can engage by making deputations at Council meetings"

In-person support to complete surveys

"Students are probably more likely to participate if it's inside school instead of their own time"

"Everyone is so busy. Bring your consultation to where we are, to make it easy"



Our consultation *promise*

“

We are committed to encouraging effective and ongoing relationships with the community to provide meaningful opportunities for community participation.

”



Our approach to *engagement*

Everyone has a right to be informed and have an opportunity to participate and provide feedback about matters that affect them. We are committed to encouraging effective and ongoing relationships with the community to provide meaningful opportunities for community participation.

Consultation activities and projects will be universally accessible and inclusive to all. We recognise that community engagement is part of an ongoing conversation and will seek and provide feedback on initiatives and activities.

Our approach to community engagement is guided by social justice, environmental, economic and civic leadership considerations.



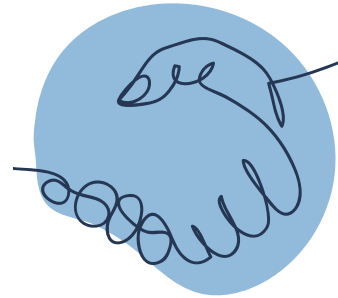


Council's Engagement Principles



Equity

We will apply fairness in decision making, prioritising and allocation of resources, particularly for those in need.



Participation

Everyone will be given genuine opportunities to participate in decisions which affect their lives.



Access

We will strive to provide fair access to services, resources and opportunities to improve the quality of life for all people.



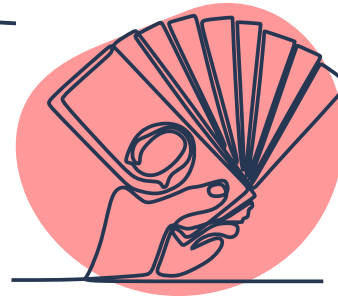
Rights

We will promote equal rights and provide opportunities for all people from all backgrounds.



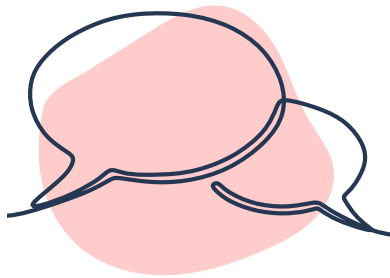
Environmental

We will protect the natural, cultural and built heritage and work to decrease consumption of resources.



Economic

We will contribute to maintaining a strong and stable economy and ensure the delivery of infrastructure is financially sustainable.



Social

We will strive towards everyone having access and equity to facilities and services.



Civic Leadership

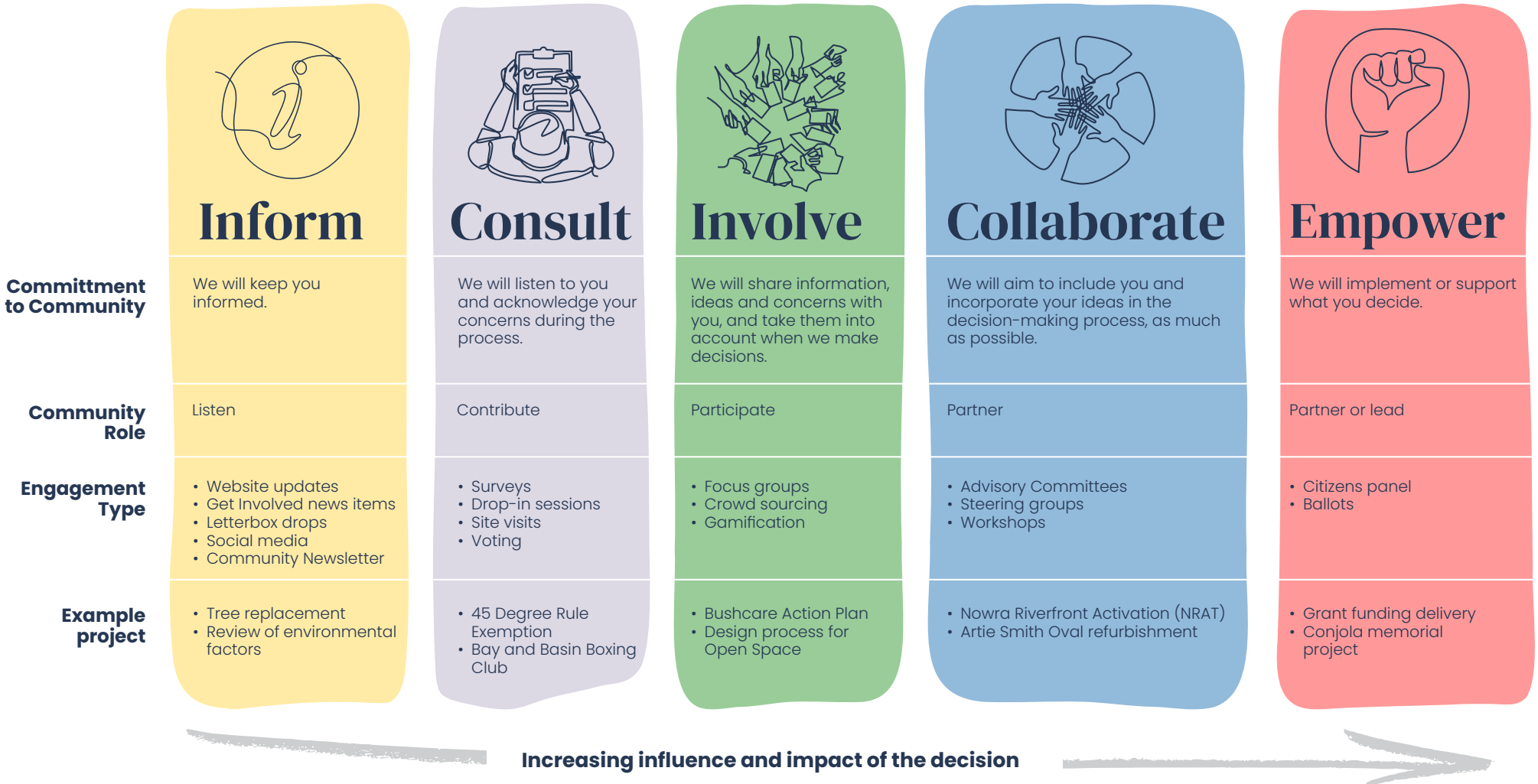
We will consider decision-making principles, levels of service and community consultation and participation.



Spectrum of engagement

Engaging with communities and stakeholders is done in a range of ways. Depending on the context, community engagement ranges from informing people about an activity, project or initiative that is already determined, through to enabling people to conduct projects themselves. This spectrum of engagement is known as the International Association of Public Participation (IAP2) and is a best-practice model that labels each different engagement level of inform, consult, involve, collaborate and empower.

Shoalhaven City Council's framework for consultation.





Roles and *responsibilities*

Various groups and teams within Council are responsible for the successful implementation of the Community Engagement Strategy and Framework. The next section outlines the responsibilities of these groups and teams.

Role	Responsibilities
<p>Councillors</p> <p>Shoalhaven City Council is made up of a Mayor and 12 Councillors – four Councillors representing each of our three wards.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support the implementation of the Community Engagement Strategy and Framework. • Uphold Council’s Engagement Principles. • Promote participation in engagement activities. • Consider engagement results when making decisions. • Follow the principles of our Community Engagement Strategy and Framework when consulting with key stakeholders.
<p>Media & Communications team</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Understand the Community Engagement Strategy and use the Framework to deliver engagement activities for the organisation. • Uphold Council’s Engagement Principles. • Support engagement activities for all staff. • Identify opportunities for improvements in our engagement practices. • Coordinate and maintain a calendar of community engagement activities being delivered by the organisation.
<p>Executive Management Team</p> <p>Senior Leadership Team</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Understand the Community Engagement Strategy and Framework. • Ensure all employees use the framework when engaging the community. • Uphold Council’s Engagement Principles. • Approve communications and engagement content in accordance with the strategy and framework. • Support Councillor understandings about the importance of appropriate Community Engagement activities.
<p>Shoalhaven City Council Employees</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consult the Media & Communications team about the need for engagement before initiating work. • Work with the Media & Communications team to design a community engagement plan, in accordance with the strategy and framework, identifying key points of influence available to the community. • Uphold Council’s Engagement Principles. • Allow enough time to develop and implement the engagement program. • Deliver engagement activities in accordance with strategy and framework. • Close the loop by documenting and reporting the findings to the Council and the community. • Undertake appropriate training to understand the IAP2 framework. • When engaging with the community, ensure a variety of diverse voices and engagement methods are used.



Role	Responsibilities
<p>Advisory Committees</p> <p>Shoalhaven City Council has several committees made up of staff, Councillors, as well as external community members. They advise on the views, needs and interests of communities in the area.</p> <p>A full list can be found in Appendix B</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Provide advice to the Council based on personal and professional experience, in accordance with relevant Terms of Reference.• Build relationships between community members and Council.• Encourage participation in community engagement opportunities.• Share information among network groups.• Spokesperson for diverse groups.
<p>Community Consultative Bodies (CCBs)</p> <p>CCBs are endorsed by the Council as the representatives for residents and ratepayers in a specific area.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Disseminate information to the community.• Promote and facilitate discussion amongst the community.• Communicate shared and collective views of the community to Council.• Share community led plans with Council so they can be considered as part of Council’s overall engagement strategy in the corporate planning process.
<p>Members of the community</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Seek out information and engagement opportunities via Council communication channels that interest or impact you.• Review materials of engagement programs to participate in.• Have an open mindset to diverse ideas and show respect to all participants involved.• Follow processes and time frames.• Understand that the outcome may not be as hoped.
<p>External consultants</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Comply with all legislative requirements and adhere to this strategy and framework along with advice of Council Officers when delivering engagement activities on behalf of the Council.



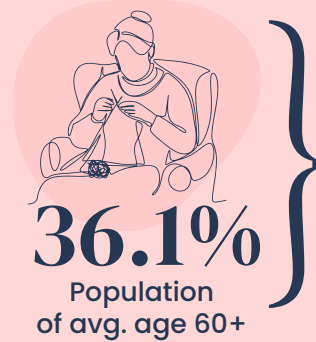
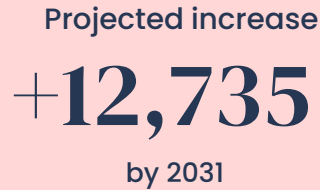
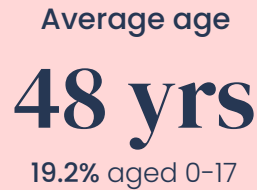
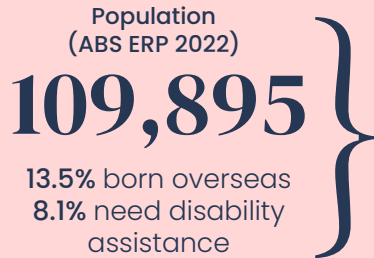


Who we engage

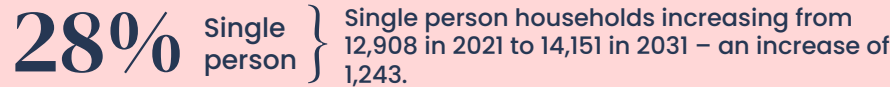
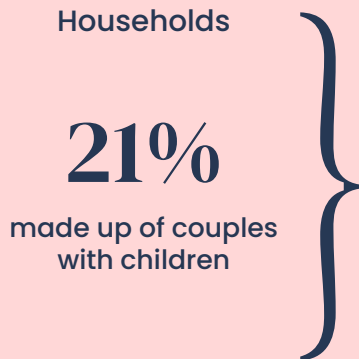
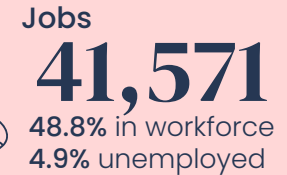
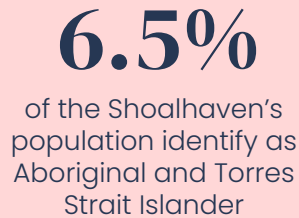
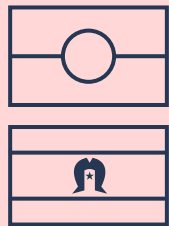
We are a diverse city of unique townships, each filled with a life and character of their own. Our spectacular, varied natural landscapes nourish and define us as the resilient, connected community we are today.

We value our community and are dedicated to preserving the rich history and future of our beautiful and diverse coastal, foothill, escarpment, and plateau environments. The data on our community is from Australian Bureau of Statistics and Remplan.

It shows that our community is diverse and evolving quickly. Therefore, a uniform engagement approach won't be effective. We need to tailor our methods for each project to best meet the needs of our community.



Current population forecasts indicate that the ageing population (65+) in the Shoalhaven will increase from 29679 (2021) to 33795 (2031). An increase of 4116 people or 14% increase. This is significant as it will impact service delivery and the way we have to engage with the broader community. This is an upward trend as numbers are expected to continue to increase.





An important part of the community engagement process includes identifying and understanding key stakeholders who will be impacted by or who have an interest in a decision.

We aim to reach as many people as possible across the community to ensure a broad range of views are heard.

We consult with internal stakeholders such as staff and Councillors, and externally with an extensive list of stakeholder groups below, depending on the scope of the project.

- Arts and culture community
- Business and industry
- Carers
- Committees (Appendix B)
- Chambers of commerce
- Community Consultative Bodies
- Children
- Community service providers
- Emergency services
- Environmental groups
- Families
- State and Federal departments
- Heritage groups
- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples
- Lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and intersex community
- State and Federal MPs
- Management committees
- Mayor and councillors
- Neighbouring councils or other local government organisations
- Not-for-profit organisations and groups
- People experiencing homelessness or risk of homelessness
- People from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds
- People with a disability
- Public transport user groups
- Ratepayers
- Residents
- Schools, education facilities and students
- Seniors/senior groups
- Service groups
- Shoalhaven City Council employees
- Sporting, leisure and recreational clubs and groups
- Students
- Users of Council facilities and services
- Visitors to the Shoalhaven
- Volunteers/volunteer organisations
- Young people
- Vulnerable people

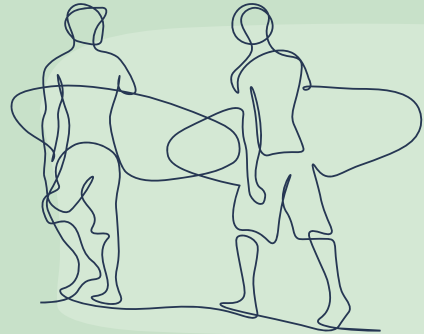




What we engage our community on

There are a variety of projects that Council invites the community to provide their feedback on and share ideas for consideration.

During consultation in March to May 2024 we heard from 509 community members and some of our Advisory Committees about the topics they are most interested in engaging with, they said...



Youth

Environmental issues and recreational precincts.



People living with a disability

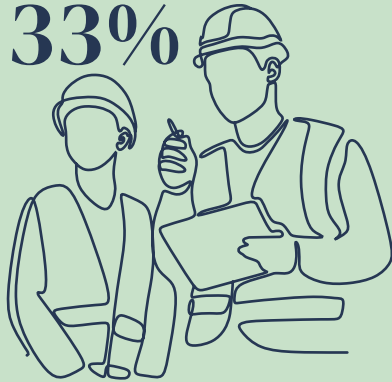
Facility design and infrastructure projects



Top community response

Local development planning and construction projects.

33%



Local development and construction projects

Roadworks



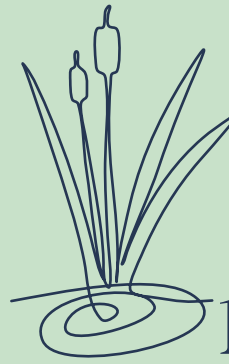
20%

Infrastructure projects

Heritage

Parks and Playgrounds

Sporting Facilities, including pools



18%

The environment, including coastal management

Animal welfare (pets and wildlife)

Bin collection, waste and recycling

Water and sewage



14%

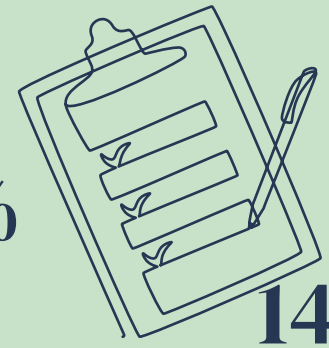
Art and culture

Community wellbeing

Tourism, events and activities in the Shoalhaven

Libraries

Volunteering



14%

Reports and strategic documents

Policies and compliance

Council services and fees





How we engage

The ways we engage with people can greatly affect who can participate and how Council receives feedback from the community. Council is committed to providing a range of engagement methods for each project.

Council projects will use various engagement methods at different stages to best meet the needs of our community and project

requirements. For instance, the Council might involve the community to gather ideas during the early stages of a design project, such as the concept design for a sporting facility, and then consult the community to finalise priorities and details.

During the consultation phase of developing this document, we conducted an online survey,

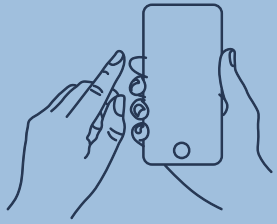
attended local village markets and consulted our Advisory Committees and heard the following top engagement methods.





Engagement *methods*

Top 10 engagement methods the community wants Council to use include:



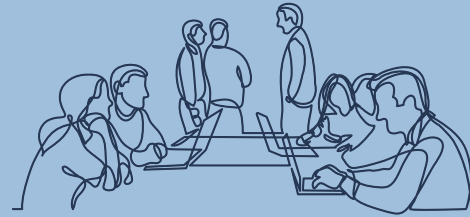
33% Online survey
416 votes



22% Email council
250 votes



8% Talk to council staff
88 votes



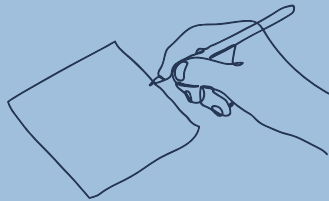
7% Face to face workshops
84 votes



6% Working group
67 votes



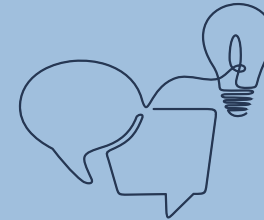
5% Tour or site visit
60 votes



5% Send a letter
54 votes



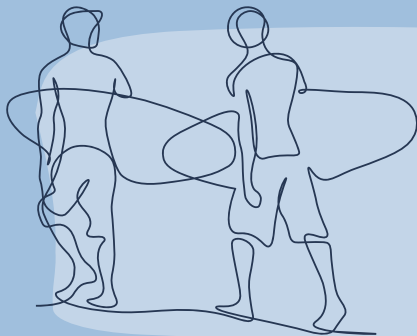
4% Call Council
49 votes



4% Advisory Committee
41 votes



3% Paper survey
30 votes



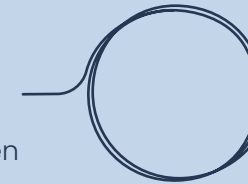
Youth

In-person workshops
via school channels



People living with a disability

Consider a variety of
engagement tools when
connecting in person.



Aboriginal community

Engage early in the
process and leverage
existing events



What we heard

"More short and sharp communications through communication channels"

"Multi deliverable content methods"

"Local community groups are powerful for word of mouth"

"Spread information about consultation opportunities through schools."



Our communications *promise*

**“
We will actively
promote community
engagement activities
through a variety of
channels to reach
broad and target
audiences.
”**



Examples of the type of engagement methods depending on the stakeholder’s level of influence include:



Inform

- Website update
- Community newsletter
- Media release
- Social media
- On-site signage
- Letters
- Emails to key stakeholders
- Community Information Hubs



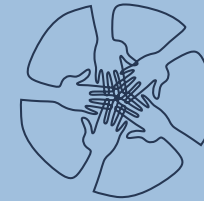
Consult

- Written submission
- Online engagement platform, Get Involved Survey (online or hard copy)
- Focus groups
- Public meetings
- Suggestion boards
- Interactive visual tools



Involve

- Crowd sourcing
- Gamification
- Drop-in sessions
- Site visits
- Voting
- Deliberative polling



Collaborate

- Deliberative forums
- Community panels
- Advisory Committee collaboration
- Workshops



Empower

- Working groups
- Citizens panel
- Ballot
- Co-design
- Delegated decision making





When we engage

Community engagement should occur at the planning stage of any project or initiative, when proposing a change in service, considering activities or infrastructure, addressing an issue that requires a decision, or when additional information or evidence is needed.

The timing of community engagement can vary between projects, depending on their complexity and nature. Often, community engagement may need to occur at multiple stages throughout a project.

Here are the main types of projects where we frequently seek community input. Planning related projects have specific exhibition timeframes which must be met; these are outlined in Council's Community Participation Plan.

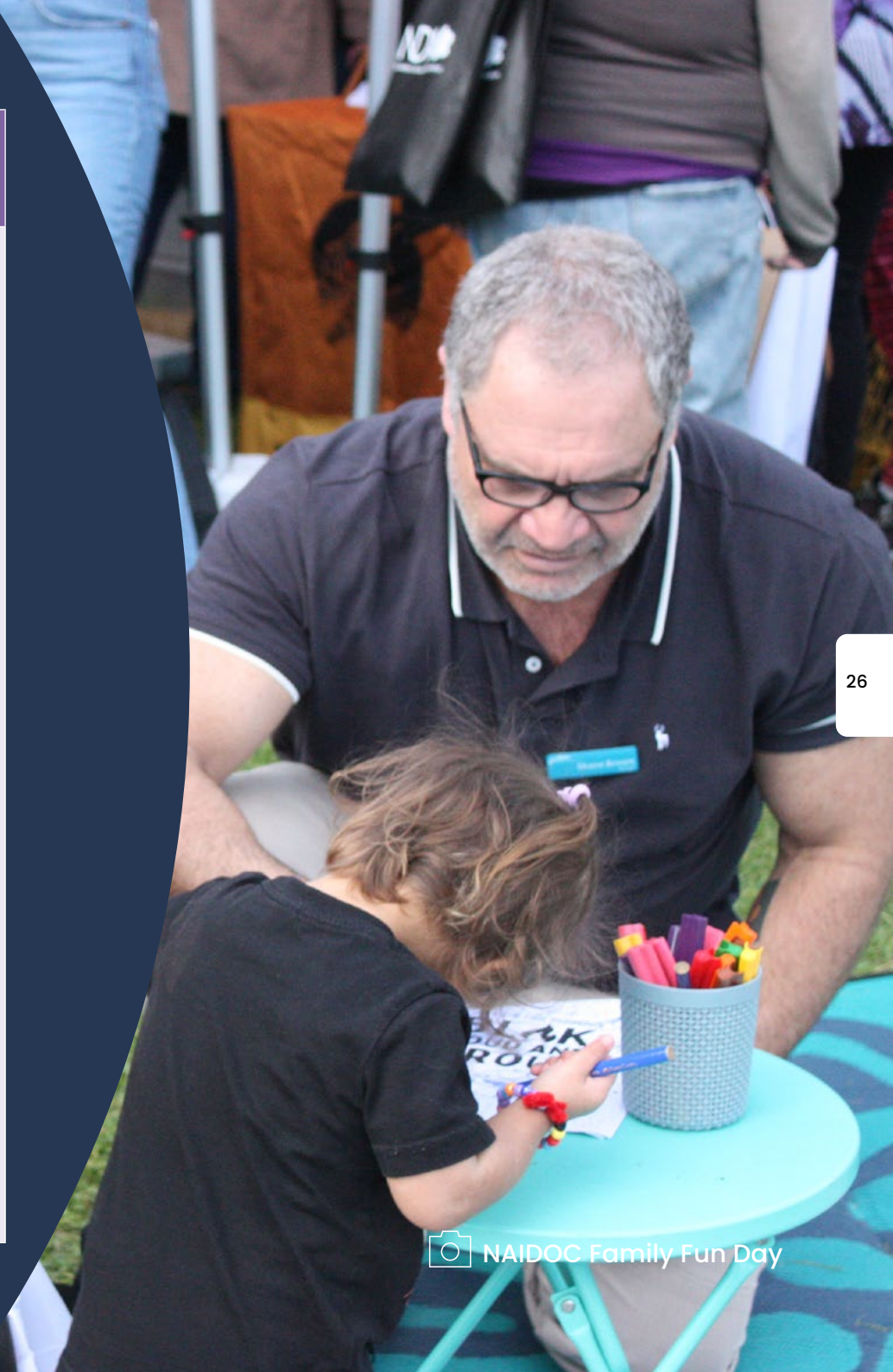
When	IPA2 engagement level	How	Minimum consultation/exhibition period
Road maintenance (e.g, potholes and non-regulatory signage)	Inform	We will share information on activities and plans with immediately affected stakeholders so that they are advised of any upcoming works. Minimum notice method: • Notification flyer or letter to immediately affected stakeholders.	7 days' notice No notice for emergency works in some cases.
Non-routine road maintenance (e.g, Boardwalk update or footpath replacement)	Inform	We will share information on activities and plans with immediately affected stakeholders so that they are advised of any upcoming works. If major changes such as delays or impact to access occurs during the works, immediately affected stakeholders will be informed. Minimum notice method: • Notification flyer or letter to immediately affected stakeholders.	7 days' notice. Longer notice period considered for severely impacted residents or businesses. No notice for emergency works in some cases.



When	IPA2 engagement level	How	Minimum consultation/exhibition period
Traffic related projects – Level 1 (e.g., regulatory signage and line markings).	Inform – Consult	<p>Development Services conduct consultation as part of their development application (DA) process – refer to Appendix A.</p> <p>We will make every effort to inform stakeholders about opportunities to provide feedback and actively involve the community, ensuring that their priorities are considered in the decision-making process.</p> <p>We will share information on activities and plans with immediately affected stakeholders so that they are advised of any upcoming works.</p> <p>Minimum notice method:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Notification flyer or letter to immediately affected stakeholders. 	<u>Consult</u> 14 days' notice
		<p>Minimum consultation method:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Notification flyer or letter to immediately affected stakeholders. • Email to relevant Community Consultative Bodies <p>We will recognise community views and concerns and ensure that where possible, these are reflected as inputs into Council's final decision.</p>	<u>Inform</u> 7 days' notice
Traffic related projects – Level 2 – where works impact access or result in a change of the environment and how it functions. (e.g., speed humps, traffic control devices, new lighting).	Inform – Consult	<p>We will share information on activities and plans with immediately affected stakeholders so that they are advised of any upcoming works.</p> <p>Minimum notice method:</p> <p>Notification flyer or letter to immediately affected stakeholders.</p>	<u>Consult</u> 28 days' notice
		<p>We will make every effort to inform stakeholders about opportunities to provide feedback and actively involve the community, ensuring that their priorities are considered in the decision-making process.</p> <p>Minimum consultation method:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Notification flyer or letter to immediately affected stakeholders. • Email to relevant Community Consultative Bodies <p>We will recognise community views and concerns and ensure that where possible, these are reflected as inputs into Council's final decision.</p>	<u>Inform</u> 7 days' notice



When	IPA2 engagement level	How	Minimum consultation/ exhibition period
<p>Planning phase – major capital works and placemaking projects (e.g., new or upgraded public spaces and facilities)</p>	<p>Consult - Involve</p>	<p>We will make every effort to inform stakeholders about opportunities to provide feedback and actively involve the community, ensuring that their priorities are considered in the decision-making process.</p> <p>We will recognise community views and concerns and ensure that where possible, these are reflected as inputs into Council's final decision.</p> <p>At a minimum, feedback channel and notification methods include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Project page on Council's website • Online engagement via the Get Involved platform • Media release • Social media <p>If the project requires involvement from key stakeholders, we will work with community to ensure that concerns and aspirations are directly reflected in the alternatives develop and provide feedback on how public input influenced the decision.</p>	<p><u>Consult</u> 28 days' notice</p>





When	IPA2 engagement level	How	Minimum consultation/ exhibition period
Concept design phase – major capital works and placemaking projects (e.g., new or upgraded public spaces and facilities)	Consult – Empower	<p>We will make every effort to inform stakeholders about opportunities to provide feedback and actively involve the community, ensuring that their priorities are considered in the decision-making process.</p> <p>We will recognise community views and concerns and ensure that where possible, these are reflected as inputs into Council's final decision.</p> <p>At a minimum, feedback channel and notification methods include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Project page on Council's website• Online engagement via the Get Involved platform• Media release• Social media <p>If the project requires involvement from key stakeholders will work with community to ensure that concerns and aspirations are directly reflected in the alternatives develop and provide feedback on how public input influenced the decision.</p> <p>If the project requires collaboration with key stakeholders, we will look to the community for advice and innovation in developing solutions and incorporate your advice and recommendations into the decisions to maximum extent possible.</p> <p>Where appropriate, we will implement what you decide.</p>	<u>Consult</u> 28 days' notice
Implementation phase - major capital works and placemaking projects (e.g., new or upgraded public spaces and facilities)	Inform	<p>We will share information on activities and plans with immediately affected stakeholders so that they are advised of any upcoming works.</p> <p>If major changes such as delays or impact to access occurs during the works, immediately affected stakeholders will be informed.</p> <p>Minimum notice method:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Notification flyer or letter to immediately affected stakeholders.	<u>Inform</u> 7 days' notice



When	IPA2 engagement level	How	Minimum consultation/ exhibition period
Naming projects (e.g., building names, street names)	Consult - Collaborate	<p>We will make every effort to inform stakeholders about opportunities to provide feedback and actively involve the community, ensuring that their priorities are considered in the decision-making process.</p> <p>We will recognise community views and concerns and ensure that where possible, these are reflected as inputs into Council's final decision.</p> <p>At a minimum, feedback channel and notification methods include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Project page on Council's website • Online engagement via the Get Involved platform • Media release • Social media <p>If the project requires involvement from key stakeholders will work with community to ensure that concerns and aspirations are directly reflected in the alternatives develop and provide feedback on how public input influenced the decision.</p> <p>If the project requires collaboration with key stakeholders, we will look to the community for advice and innovation in developing solutions and incorporate your advice and recommendations into the decisions to maximum extent possible.</p>	<u>Consult</u> 28 days' notice
<p>Council's key plans and strategies (e.g., Community Strategic Plan and Disability Inclusion Action Plan)</p> <p>Council's Annual Operational Plan and Budget</p> <p>Council's other key policies (e.g., Access Areas for Dogs)</p>	Consult	<p>We will make every effort to inform stakeholders about opportunities to provide feedback and actively involve the community, ensuring that their priorities are considered in the decision-making process.</p> <p>We will recognise community views and concerns and ensure that where possible, these are reflected as inputs into Council's final decision.</p> <p>At a minimum, feedback channel and notification methods include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Project page on Council's website • Online engagement via the Get Involved platform • Media release • Social media 	<u>Consult</u> 28 days' notice



When	IPA2 engagement level	How	Minimum consultation/ exhibition period
<p>Environmental projects and plans (e.g., Coastal Management Program (CMP) and Flood studies.</p>	<p>Consult – involve</p>	<p>We will make every effort to inform stakeholders about opportunities to provide feedback and actively involve the community, ensuring that their priorities are considered in the decision-making process.</p> <p>We will recognise community views and concerns and ensure that where possible, these are reflected as inputs into Council's final decision.</p> <p>At a minimum, feedback channel and notification methods include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Project page on Council's website • Online engagement via the Get Involved platform • Media release • Social media <p>If the project requires involvement from key stakeholders will work with community to ensure that concerns and aspirations are directly reflected in the alternatives develop and provide feedback on how public input influenced the decision.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Workshops with Coastal Management Program committees. 	<p><u>Consult</u> 28 days' notice</p>



Nowra riverfront revitalisation Aboriginal community workshop



How engagement influences decision *making*

When a project has the potential to incorporate ideas and feedback into its decision-making process, community engagement becomes crucial. Effective community engagement ensures that the voices of those affected by the project are heard and considered, fostering a sense of ownership and trust among stakeholders.

Thorough planning is essential to identify which decisions require stakeholder feedback and to determine the extent to which this feedback can influence outcomes beyond regulatory and mandatory requirements.

If community feedback can indeed influence a decision, it is important to understand where each stakeholder falls on the IAP2 (International Association for Public Participation) spectrum. The IAP2 spectrum ranges from informing stakeholders to empowering them, with stages including consultation, involvement, and collaboration.

By carefully planning and understanding the dynamics of stakeholder influence, projects can effectively integrate community feedback, leading to more inclusive and accepted outcomes.

Our common process for involving community engagement in the decision-making process is illustrated in the adjacent diagram.





Project plan developed	<p>Define the project objectives and assess whether community engagement is necessary.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">- Identify who will be affected by the project.- Understand the size of the project's effects.- Gauge the level of interest and concern within the community.
Research and engagement planning	<p>Gain a deeper understanding of the project and identify the most effective strategy.</p> <p>The following considerations will be made during this phase.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">- Purpose, objectives and scope of community engagement.- Identify any non-negotiables.- What the community can influence or provide feedback on.- How feedback will be used to influence the outcome.- Who in the community Council will seek to engage with.- What type of engagement methods will be used.- When and where the engagement will take place.
Community engagement	<p>Promote the community engagement opportunity and capture feedback from the community and key stakeholder groups.</p> <p>During the delivery of engagement, we will consider the following to ensure engagement is genuine and respectful.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">- Activities are accessible and inclusive.- Clear about the purpose and level of influence.- We listen to the community.- Respect diverse views and experiences of our community.- Engagement plans are monitored, and changes are made if required.
Share high-level engagement outcomes within three business days	<p>Project manager to liaise with the Media and Communications team to share high-level engagement outcomes including the number of participants and key themes identified in the feedback.</p>
In depth analysis of feedback	<p>Feedback is collated and analysed. If required, changes are made to the project which reflect what has been heard.</p> <p>During this stage, a report is prepared for Council detailing the outcomes of the community engagement to inform the decision or draft document.</p>
Share Council report	<p>Before the Council meeting, the report will be shared with engaged participants for review.</p>
Council decision	<p>A decision on the direction of a project is made during a Council meeting (if required).</p>
Next steps provided – link to Council decision	<p>The Council will keep the community updated on how their input has shaped the project's direction and inform them of any upcoming steps.</p>





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By carefully planning and understanding the dynamics of stakeholder influence, projects can effectively integrate community feedback, leading to more inclusive and accepted outcomes.

”



How we plan our *engagement*

Proper planning enables the Council to conduct engagement within the required timelines efficiently and allocate the necessary resources to the process.

Below are the key steps we follow to ensure comprehensive consideration has been taken to plan community engagement. We have provided an example to help explain how this process works.

- 1** Who are the key stakeholders?
- 2** What is their level of interest in the project?
- 3** How much will the decision impact them?
- 4** What is their level of influence?
- 5** Select the engagement method
- 6** Communicate the engagement opportunities
- 7** Conduct engagement with the stakeholder
- 8** Provide feedback to the stakeholder





Example engagement plan: Sporting facility design

1	Who are the key stakeholders? Who are the groups of people that will be impacted or are interested in this project?	Sporting clubs	Residents	Councillors	General community
2	What is their level of interest in the project? How much do they care about the project and the final decision?	High	Medium	High	Low
3	How much will the decision impact them? Will the decision change the way they live, work or play in the Shoalhaven?	High	Medium	Low	Low
4	What is their level of influence? A stakeholder's influence is assessed through their level of impact and interest in the project. This evaluation will help in identifying how stakeholders will interact with the project and what strategies should be used to engage them. Refer to appendix C	Collaborate or empower	Involve	Involve	Consult
5	Select the engagement method. Based on their level of influence, choose the most appropriate engagement method to receive their input and feedback. Refer to pg 20.	Working group	Site visit	Workshop	Online survey
6	Communicate the engagement opportunities. Establishing clear and open lines of communication to share information and gather input.	Email to key contacts	Letterbox drop	Email invitation	Community newsletter Social media
7	Conduct engagement with the stakeholder. Actively seeking and recording feedback, concerns, and suggestions from stakeholders.	Regular meetings held at a local sporting facility and an independent facilitator will host.	Submit any feedback or suggestions via letter or email to Council.	Interactive workshops	Get Involved survey
8	Provide feedback to the stakeholder. Keeping stakeholders informed about how their input has influenced the project and any subsequent steps.	Email to key contacts	Letterbox drop	Councillor newsletter	Community newsletter Social media



What are we *measuring*?

We promise to keep monitoring and improving how we engage with communities to make sure we get the best possible results for everyone.

We will look at how well we are doing based on the parameters we have set out in this strategy document. This will help us understand how effective we are at getting the most appropriate communities interested and involved.

We want to continually improve how we consult with people, making sure our methods work well for our community. It's important for us to find out what needs to be better so we can achieve our goals and fulfill our community's hopes.





Here is a list of ways we are going to achieve our goals.

Accessible information	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use easy English. • Use various communication methods (e.g. printouts in libraries, radio ads, video, social media, website, media release etc.,). • Liaise directly with target audiences.
Accountability	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Communicate with the community in a timely manner. • Minimum 7 days for informing community. • Minimum four weeks for consultation.
Diversity of voices	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Allow sufficient time for consultation. • Ensure community consultation is considered at various stages of the project lifecycle. • Visible and accessible to the community via existing events, channels, networks etc. • Consider all viewpoints when making decisions.
Quality of data	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Will engage with all relevant target groups as outlined in the strategy.
Participation rates	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide opportunities for stakeholders to share ideas with each other. • Be mindful of seasonal events and feedback expectations when developing an engagement timeframe.
Closing the loop	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Report back on engagement outcomes and outline how feedback will influence the final decision. • Respond to feedback and questions in a timely manner.
Open communication	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Staff to work with the Media & Communications team to establish a community engagement plan for projects. • Communicate how much influence the engagement process will have in the decision-making process. • Frequently check-in with the community/consultation participants to seek feedback on the consultation process.





Ways to get involved

We value your feedback and encourage people in the community to share their thoughts on what the Council does and how it does it.

Our commitment to you

- Respond to phone messages within two days
- When you write to us via email or letter, we will respond within 28 days
- When you lodge a maintenance request online (Council's website) we will ensure that our system provide you with immediate acknowledgement of lodgement and we will respond within 28 days.

Vote at elections

Council elections are held every four years to elect representatives, known as Councillors. If you are a resident, it is compulsory to vote in local government elections.

Follow our social media pages

Facebook www.facebook.com/shoalhavencitycouncil
Instagram www.instagram.com/shoalhavencitycouncil/
LinkedIn www.linkedin.com/company/shoalhaven-city-council



 **Subscribe to our 'In your neighbourhood' community newsletter**

 **Visit our website**

 **Provide general feedback via our online chat, email, phone, letter or in-person**

 **Speak with a Councillor**

 **Attend a Council meeting**

 **Live stream a Council meeting**

 **Participate in Council meetings**

 **Read a Council meeting agenda and minutes**

 **Become an Advisory Committee member**

 **Participate in consultations via our engagement platform – Get Involved**



Tiers of Engagement

Depending on a community member's interest levels, time available and willingness to participate, there are many ways to engage with Council.

Level 1

Keep me in the loop about projects Council is working on.



Inform

- Attend Council meetings
- Community newsletter
- Social media
- Website updates
- Community Information Hubs

Level 2

Occasional commitment depending on my interest level, time available and how much it's going to impact me.



Consult

- Survey
- Public meeting
- Suggestion board

Level 3

I have time and an invested interest in participating in decisions that impact me and my community.



Involve

- Deputation at a Council meeting
- Site visit



Collaborate

- Community Panels
- Be a part of an Advisory Committee



Empower

- Working group opportunities



Glossary

Accessible

Giving people of all abilities opportunities to participate.

Community Strategic Plan

reflects the community's vision and aspirations for the city.

Engagement programs

A way to help connect a stakeholder to a project and build a relationship that encourages inclusion and feedback.

Get Involved

Is Council's online community engagement platform; it provides a central location for all projects which the community can provide feedback on.

Immediately affected

Adjoining landowners, businesses and catchment areas that would benefit from being informed.

International Association of Public Participation (IAP2)

The peak body for the community and stakeholder engagement sector.

Level of influence

The extent to which stakeholders can affect the project's direction and outcomes.

Non-negotiables

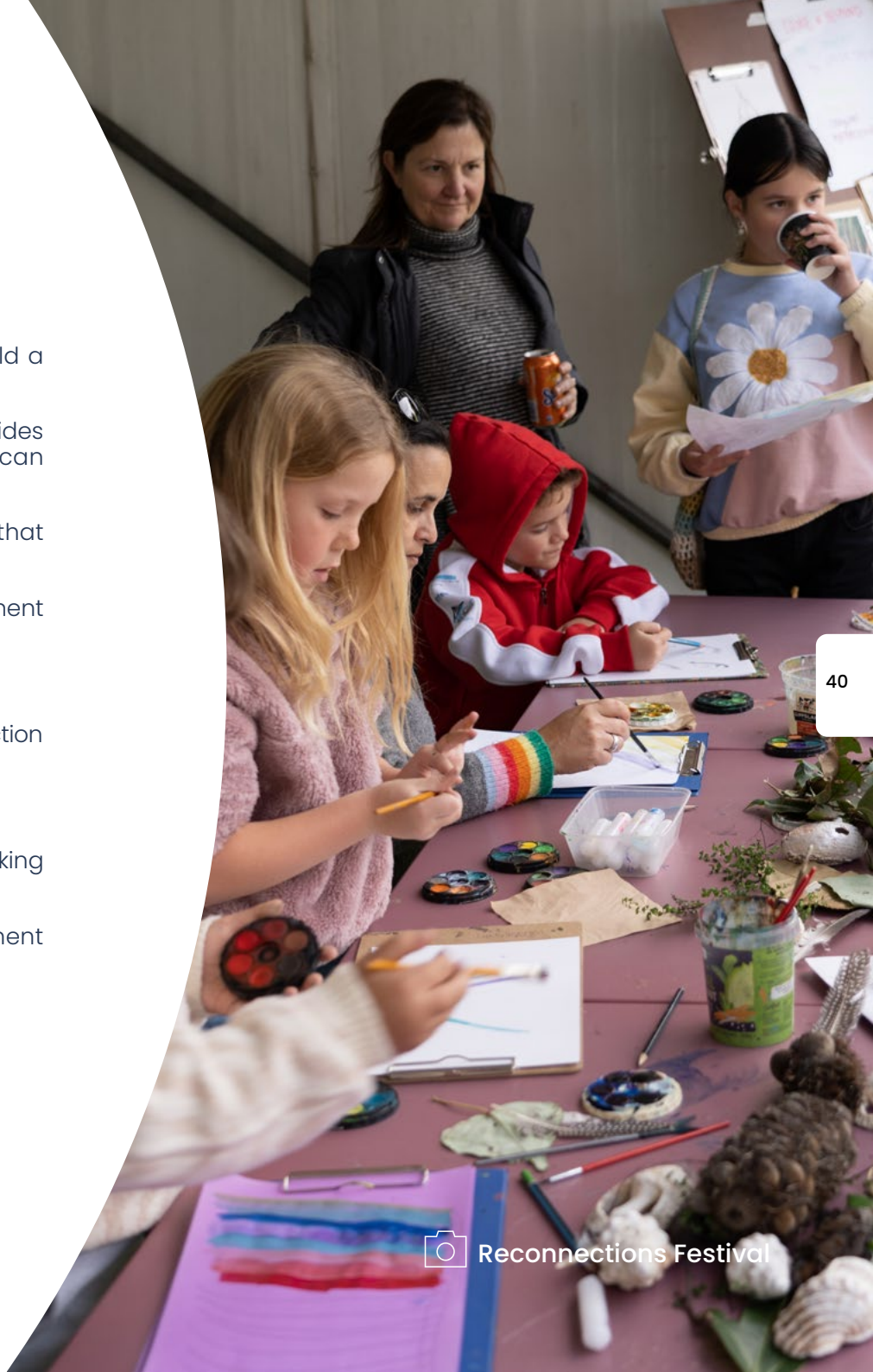
Project scope that is not open to discussion or changes.

Public participation

Any process that directly engages the public in decision-making and considers public input in making that decision.

Severely impacted

Access is impacted and/or change in how the environment functions (e.g., lightening, noise, congestion etc).





Address all correspondence to:
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