

# COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT POLICY



# **COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT POLICY**

Approved by: Council  
Doc Controller: General Manager  
File Ref: 126

Document code: DVC-POL-041  
Version: 1.0  
Approved date: 25/11/2021  
Next review date: 11/2023

## **1. PURPOSE**

The Community Engagement Policy outlines Derwent Valley Council's commitment and approach to community engagement practice. It details the principles that guide how Council will undertake meaningful engagement with the community and stakeholders when making decisions, delivering services, or representing the community.

## **2. SCOPE**

This policy applies to all Councillors, Council officers, contractors and external consultants who undertake or participate in a community engagement project or activity. This policy applies across all the work that Council delivers, from strategic planning to service delivery and legislative requirements. The policy informs the planning, design, implementation, and evaluation of community engagement processes.

## **3. LEGISLATION**

The Local Government Act 1993 sets out the functions and powers of Tasmanian councils in section 20. Those functions include, 'to represent and promote the interest of the community' (section 20(1)). In performing its functions, Council is to 'consult, involve and be accountable to the community' (section 20(2)).

## **4. DEFINITIONS**

<b>Term</b>	<b>Definitions</b>
Community	A group of people who share similar location, interest, or affiliation with the Derwent Valley Local Government Area. These include but are not limited to residents, ratepayers, business owners and operators, workers, students, visitors, including tourists and shoppers, community organisations including clubs, churches and charity groups.
Stakeholder	Refers to a person, group of people, or organisation that have or feel they have an interest or can affect or be impacted by an issue or decision.
Community Engagement	<p>A planned process with the specific purpose of working across organisations, stakeholders and communities to shape our decisions or actions in relation to a problem, opportunity, or outcome.</p> <p>This process exists on a spectrum from inform, consult, involve, collaborate, to empower, as defined by the International Association for Public Participation (IAP2).</p>
IAP2	International Association for Public Participation. The organisation that oversees the development of standards for best practice in engagement and public participation in decision making.

## **5. POLICY**

### **5.1 Policy Statement**

- i) Derwent Valley Council is committed to engaging with its community and stakeholders on issues that affect them.
- ii) Council values effective engagement in developing positive relationships with its community and recognises that community participation contributes to better decision-making.
- iii) Council's Community Engagement Framework will guide the delivery of Council's community engagement projects and activities. This framework is informed by International Association of Public Participation (IAP2) Core Values and Public Participation Spectrum.
- iv) Council will consider the opinion, ideas and feedback of our community, and balance these with other influences such as expert advice, resources, and budgetary constraints, when making decisions or delivering services.
- v) Council will engage with our communities when in the opinion of Council officers or elected Council members:
  - o The view of individuals or groups within our community will provide further information valuable to the planning, solution, or decision.
  - o The issue will significantly affect existing levels of service.
  - o The issue is complex or controversial.
  - o The issue will have long term impact on the community.
  - o When it is a legislative requirement.
- vi) There may be circumstances under which community engagement is impractical. Such as where emergency response is required, or a statutory process may be compromised.
- vii) The level of community participation in the decision making and the engagement method used will be determined by factors including the level of impact of the issue, time and resources available or any legal requirements.
- viii) Council will as much as possible commit appropriate levels of resourcing to the delivery of effective community engagement.
- ix) In applying this policy, Council will demonstrate our values of Quality Service, Collaboration, Growth, Integrity and Wellbeing.

## 5.2 Guiding Principles

Derwent Valley Council has developed the following principles to guide the application of this policy.

### Principle 1 – Authentic

- The purpose of the engagement and scope of what's being decided is honestly and clearly communicated (including those aspects of the project the community can influence).
- The decision-making process is clear including how input will be used.
- Community input will not be sought if a decision has already been made.
- Community input is considered in the final decision or outcome.
- Authentic engagement allows for adequate notice and time for community response.

### Principle 2 – Transparent

- Information is clear (without jargon), relevant, and timely.
- A summary of community feedback and how it will be used is provided.
- Engagement outcome reports are published.
- The decision or outcome is communicated to people involved in the process and to the broader community with an explanation of how community input influenced the decision.

### Principle 3 – Inclusive

- As many people as possible, who have an interest in or will be affected by a decision, are identified, and invited to participate. This is to ensure a diverse range of viewpoints are captured.
- Community diversity is valued, and consideration of different stakeholder audiences, their views and their diverse needs will be made when planning for an engagement.
- Barriers to participation are identified and removed or mitigated.

### Principle 4 – Planned

- Engagement is a well-planned process with a clearly defined purpose and stages for community input.
- Planning improves outcomes by engaging community as early as possible in the process and identifying critical issues and opportunities early in the process.
- Planning delivers a coordinated approach to community engagement and ensures Council has considered how individual projects fit into the big picture.

### Principle 5 – Partnership

- We seek to build effective relationships based on trust, respect and mutual understanding that will improve the outcomes of community engagement.
- We encourage activities that foster a shared understanding and unite the community.

### Principle 6 – Continuous Improvement

- We review and evaluate the engagement that we undertake to learn how we can improve.

# **COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT POLICY**

Approved by: Council  
Doc Controller: General Manager  
File Ref: 126

Document code: DVC-POL-041  
Version: 1.0  
Approved date: 25/11/2021  
Next review date: 11/2023

## **5.3 Privacy in Community Engagement**

Council is committed to protecting the personal information of all participants of its community engagement process. Personal information collected in any engagement activity will only be used for the purposes of ongoing engagement on the issue by Council. Such information will not be made available to the public.

Written submissions received as part of a community engagement process will be considered as available for public inspection in its entirety if requested or necessary, unless confidentially is requested by the person making the submission.

Council will be guided by the *Derwent Valley Council Privacy Policy* (DVC-POL15), and the Personal Information Protection Principles listed in Schedule 1 of the *Personal Information Protection Act 2004 (Tas)*.

## **6. RELATED DOCUMENTS**

- DVC-POL-015 Derwent Valley Council Privacy Policy
- Derwent Valley Council - Community Engagement Framework
- IAP2 Quality Assurance Standard 2015