



## POLICY MANUAL

<b>POLICY NO: 1.2.15</b>	<b>COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT POLICY</b>
<b>OBJECTIVE:</b>	To broadly define Lismore City Council's approach to community engagement.
<b>STRATEGIC PLAN LINK:</b>	Engage With the Community
<b>PROGRAM:</b>	Communications
<b>AUTHORISED: 5/8/97</b>	<b>REVIEWED: 23/6/2009</b>

### **PURPOSE**

The aim of this policy is to:

- demonstrate Lismore City Council's commitment to the values and principles of best practice community engagement
- define Council's approach to community engagement
- provide a framework to Council to guide the implementation of community engagement activities.

### **SCOPE**

This policy applies to all community engagement activities undertaken in the name of Lismore City Council.

### **FRAMEWORK**

Lismore City Council uses a framework developed by the International Association for Public Participation (IAP2). The levels of community engagement range from inform to empower.

- **Inform** - to provide the public with balanced and objective information to assist them in understanding the problem, alternatives, benefits and/or solutions
- **Consult** - to obtain public feedback on alternatives, projects and/or designs
- **Involve** - to work directly with the public throughout the decision-making process to ensure that community concerns and aspirations are consistently understood and considered
- **Collaborate** - to partner with the public in each aspect of the decision including the development of alternatives and the identification of the preferred solution.
- **Empower** - where the public makes the final decision\*.

*\*Please Note - In the local government context elected representatives are empowered by the community through the democratic process to make decisions following input from the community and Council officers.*

## **PRINCIPLES**

Lismore City Council will use the following principles for engagement with the community.

Council will:

- Be open and transparent about the intent and nature of any community engagement activity.
- Be clear about the level of influence the community has in any decision-making process.
- Communicate the values underpinning Council's engagement processes where individuals:
  - are respectful of each other
  - act fairly and with integrity with each other
  - actively listen to each other, and
  - are each accountable for their actions.
- Recognise that varying levels of engagement are required at different times across the range of Council planning services and operations.
- Develop inclusive community engagement plans that reflect diversity across the community.
- Provide the community with timely, clear, quality information that is accessible.
- Work with the community to understand their issues and interests to enable informed decisions to be made.
- Be open to practical and innovative ideas
- Work within agreed timeframes for all community engagement activities
- Demonstrate and explain to the community how their feedback has been considered in the decision-making process.
- Forward all relevant information arising from community engagement to other areas of Council for further action.
- Continually evaluate engagement activities and learn from past performance to improve future community engagement.

## **POLICY CONTEXT**

This Community Engagement Policy is informed and underpinned by a number of Council policies and procedures including:

- Lismore City Council *draft* Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Consultation Guidelines
- Lismore City Council Policy on the Notification and Advertising of Development Applications, Chapter 10, Part A of the Lismore Development Control Plan. (This policy reflects the requirements of the *Environmental Planning and Assessment Act 1979*.)

## **TERMINOLOGY AND DEFINITIONS**

The following terms and definitions are used in this policy and in the planning and delivery of community engagement activities by Council.

**Community** - people who live, work, study, visit, or use facilities and services in the Lismore local government area.

**Community engagement** - community engagement provides opportunities for people who are affected by, or interested in, a Council decision or project to participate in the decision-making process and contribute to the outcome.

**Project** - refers to any Council project, program, plan or scheme.