

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT POLICY

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1. TITLE

Community Engagement Policy

2. OBJECTIVE

To outline Council's commitment to and steps for achieving effective and inclusive community engagement.

3. DEFINITIONS AND ABBREVIATIONS

Term	Meaning
Community Engagement	Community Engagement is a planned process. It involves working with organisations, stakeholders and communities to shape the decisions or actions of the members of the community, stakeholders or organisation in relation to a problem, opportunity or outcome.

4. BACKGROUND

Council understands that engaging meaningfully with residents, local groups, businesses, organisations and other stakeholders, builds relationships, enhances community capacity and is critical for ensuring Council decisions are well-informed. Council recognises that consultation can provide opportunities for community members to meet and hear each other, and that positive outcomes can occur through solving problems together.

This Policy sets out a vision for community engagement in Glen Eira and outlines a set of key guiding principles. The principles stated draw on the Core Values developed by the International Association of Public Participation which is widely regarded as the best practice approach to community engagement.

5. SCOPE AND RESPONSIBILITY

Opportunities for engagement are inclusive and open to all stakeholders and Council is proactive in presenting them, ensuring opportunities are appropriate, diverse and supported by the use of innovative technologies.

Community engagement is the responsibility of all Council business units, teams and individual employees, including contractors of Council and elected councillors. This Policy therefore applies to the whole Council organisation.

The Community Wellbeing Division will lead community engagement across Council to ensure the effective application of engagement principles and processes. This Policy, in setting out a vision for community engagement and key guiding principles, acknowledges that these processes will be different for individual engagements, depending on the topic, the stakeholders involved and the outcomes anticipated. Effective application of the Policy will therefore involve a range of approaches and methods.

6. POLICY

- 6.1 Council will engage with all members of the Glen Eira community to strengthen relationships, build community capacity and facilitate informed and transparent decision making.
- 6.2 Council will ensure that the purpose of its engagement is clear and the community understands how their input will inform decision making processes.
- 6.3 Council will ensure that community engagement activities are well planned, coordinated, accessible and inclusive and will provide reasonable timeframes for contribution to all engagement activities.
- 6.4 Council will proactively engage with the community using a range of methods as well as seek out new, innovative ways of engaging with people (including online and creative, visual methods) that increase accessibility.
- 6.5 Council will encourage those affected by a decision to be involved in the decision-making process
- 6.6 Council will seek out the participation of those in the community whose voices are not often heard.
- 6.7 Council will be respectful and actively listen to different points of view, acknowledging the diverse range of knowledge, expertise and experiences in our community.
- 6.8 Council will report back to the community in a timely manner about how their input was considered and how it influenced the final outcome.
- 6.9 Council will advocate for its community and ensure that the community's views, needs and concerns are raised with other levels of government or relevant stakeholders.
- 6.10 Council will monitor its approach and undertake evaluation and review to ensure continuous improvement in its approach to community engagement.

7. HUMAN RIGHTS CHARTER COMPATIBILITY

This Policy has been assessed as being compatible with the *Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities Act 2006*.

8. ASSOCIATED DOCUMENTS

Glen Eira Council and Community Plan 2017-2021
Glen Eira's Community Engagement Strategy
Glen Eira's Community Engagement Toolkit (in development)

9. REFERENCES/RESOURCES

Local Government Act 1989
Health and Wellbeing Act 2008
Planning and Environment Act 2007

Road Management Act 2004

Victorian Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities Act 2006

Victorian Auditor-General's Report Public Participation and Community Engagement: Local Government Sector, May 2017

International Association of Public Participation – Core Values for Public Participation and associated resources