

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT POLICY

Policy Number:	5.1.6
Approved by:	Council
Approved Date:	June 2025
Date of Next Review:	June 2026
Applicable to:	Councillors, Council employees and temporary staff
Responsible Officer:	Manager Customer and Communications
Related Policies:	Customer Service Policy Media and Communications Policy
Related Documents:	Wellington Shire Council Community Engagement Strategy
Statutory Reference:	<i>Local Government Act 2020</i>

OVERVIEW

This policy sets out the Wellington Shire Council's commitment to meaningful, transparent, and inclusive community engagement. It outlines expectations for staff and Councillors when planning, delivering, and considering community input to inform decisions, consistent with the principles in the *Local Government Act 2020* and best practice frameworks.

THE POLICY

Wellington Shire Council recognises the value of community engagement in shaping better decisions, building trust, and strengthening relationships. Engagement must be tailored to the scope and influence of the decision or project, with a clear purpose, approach, and commitment to close the loop with participants.

Council staff will undertake community engagement that is genuine, inclusive, and proportionate to the decision or action.

Councillors will seek and consider engagement outcomes to inform decisions that reflect the needs and aspirations of the community.

Responsibility of all Council Staff

All Council Staff are responsible for planning and delivering community engagement in line with the Community Engagement Strategy and legislative requirements.

Responsibility of Managers and Supervisors

Managers and Supervisors are responsible for ensuring staff follow the appropriate processes to share information, report back to the community and provide community engagement planning documents for audit.

Responsibility of Councillors

Councillors are responsible for considering the insights gathered through community engagement as part of their decision-making responsibilities and deliberative requirements.

Guiding Documents

This Policy must be read in conjunction with the Community Engagement Strategy, which provides:

- Definitions of community engagement and deliberative engagement
- Guidance on when and how engagement is undertaken
- The principles that guide engagement (including IAP2 and legislative requirements)
- The importance of reporting back to the community to close the loop and build trust through transparency
- Tools, templates, and processes for consistent delivery across the organisation

Wellington Shire Council will update templates and resources to assist staff with delivering community engagement plans and outcomes to align with this policy and the Community Engagement Strategy. These resources will support an effective and consistent approach to community engagement across the organisation.

REVISION HISTORY

VERSION	DATE	SUMMARY OF CHANGES
1.0	December 2022	Review date extended to align with endorsed Strategy
2.0	June 2025	Reviewed alongside the updated Community Engagement Strategy. More simplified language and reference to tools and processes to support community engagement practices.