

COMMUNITY & STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT

Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to embed a strong foundation for organisation-led Engagement practice and culture at the City of Karratha (the City). It aims to support transparent and evidence-based decision-making, build Community and Stakeholder trust, and ensure outcomes reflect the diverse needs and aspirations of the Community we serve.

Definitions

Community includes people who can be connected by where they live, their identity, interests, or values. It refers to individuals and groups with a social, cultural, or place-based connection, such as residents, local businesses and community groups.

Stakeholders include anyone who is affected by, interested in, or able to influence a decision, whether they live in the area, or not. This could include:

- Traditional Owners
- Businesses and Not-For-Profit Organisations
- Community Organisations and Local Clubs
- Tourists and Visitors
- FIFO Workers
- Government Agencies (local, state or federal)
- Non-Government Organisations
- Legal and Regulatory Bodies
- City of Karratha staff

Participant is an individual or organisation that takes part in an Engagement activity, by providing input, feedback or contributions through any method or channel offered or facilitated by the City.

Engagement Institute (formerly International Association of Public Participation Australasia – IAP2), leads professional standards in Engagement practice.

Engagement refers to the process to provide information to or seek input from Community and Stakeholders by consulting, involving, collaborating with, or empowering to participate in the City's decision making and shape outcomes.

- The **Engagement Process** is the step-by-step approach the City uses to plan, implement, and review Community Engagement. It includes identifying the purpose and scope, identifying who will be impacted by a decision or outcome, choosing accessible and inclusive methods and activities, communicating information, gathering and analysing input, reporting back, and evaluating the effectiveness of the process to support continuous learning. The Engagement Process is shaped by the City's Engagement Framework.

The **Engagement Framework** refers to the City's customised approach to Engagement, informed by the Engagement Institute, best practices, legislative intent, Community and Stakeholder consultation, staff consultation, and regular reviews.

Engagement Fatigue occurs when people become tired or disinterested due to frequent or poorly timed Engagement requests, or when their previous participation does not appear to influence decisions or outcomes. This reduces their willingness to engage in future processes.

The **Knowledge Bank** is an internal digital repository where de-identified data and insights, gathered through past Community and Stakeholder Engagement activities is stored.

Policy Statement

Engagement will be undertaken by the City to inform and educate Community and Stakeholders about the City's decisions and activities and to inform the City's decision-making. The City commits to engaging purposefully and appropriately, based on scale, complexity, and anticipated impact of a decision.

The City commits to a principle-led, equity-centred approach—valuing lived experience, local knowledge and diverse perspectives, especially from people who may face barriers to being heard. We promote culturally safe and accessible Engagement, supported by legislation, best practice standards established by the Engagement Institute, and the City's Engagement Framework.

Policy Principles

Community and Stakeholder Engagement at the City is guided by six principles. Applying these principles will enable Community and Stakeholders to effectively participate in the City's decision-making.

1. Responsiveness

Timely and Adaptable

Engagement will begin early in the decision-making process to ensure Community have a genuine opportunity to influence outcomes. When early Engagement cannot occur, or is not appropriate, Community will be kept informed of progress and decisions.

The City will remain adaptable in its Engagement, responding to new information, changing needs, and emerging circumstances. To reduce Engagement Fatigue, the City will coordinate Engagement timing and activities across the organisation and utilize the Knowledge Bank to inform decisions when considered appropriate.

Advertising Period

For any engagement opportunities, particularly face-to-face activities, a formal notice via a communication platform must be provided at least two weeks (16 days in total, including weekends) in advance.

Periods When Engagement May be Avoided

The City will pause or delay Engagement activities during culturally significant periods or times when Community participation is likely to be limited. These may include:

- Public Holidays
- Culturally significant periods and religious events such as Sorry Business, Lore/Law Time, or any other specific cultural or religious event, as advised by Community and Stakeholders
- Periods impacting any targeted segment's participation such as school holidays, sporting season-changeover, sector/industry events, emergency events, or any other specific period, as advised by Community and Stakeholders or Engagement Officers.
- Between the last Ordinary Council Meeting of a calendar year and first Ordinary Council Meeting of a new calendar year.
- The caretaker period leading up to local government elections when Council must avoid making major decisions and Engagement activities could influence election outcomes.

2. Inclusivity and Equity

Inclusive, Equitable, and Culturally Respectful

The City is committed to undertaking Engagement and communication that is accessible and inclusive of all Community members, regardless of background, ability, or circumstance. This includes recognising and addressing barriers caused by power imbalances, inequalities, or lack of access to digital tools, language, or literacy. The City honours cultural differences and is committed to understanding and following culturally appropriate practices and protocols.

Where appropriate, the City may provide low-value incentives (such as vouchers, prize draws, catering, and merchandise), reimbursements (such as public transport and creche sessions), or sitting fees (to Aboriginal Elders) to reduce barriers to participation and support inclusive engagement, particularly for Community segments and Stakeholders who may face financial, time or access constraints.

3. Integrity

Transparent, Honest and Ethical

The City will be open and honest about what the Community can and cannot influence. It will report back on feedback received and clearly explain how it was considered, including when it does not lead to change. The City will ensure communication is honest, accessible, and easy to understand. Engagement will be delivered ethically, in line with legislation, professional standards, and the City's codes of conduct.

4. Objectivity

Impartial, Balanced and Informed

All Participants will be given accurate and meaningful information to support informed participation. Engagement will be balanced and free from favouritism or undue influence. Decisions informed by Community and Stakeholder input will be based on merit, with all relevant information considered, without bias or self-interest. All Engagement data will be accurately represented and communicated.

5. Commitment

Leadership and Organisational Commitment

The City will embed a culture of Engagement across all levels of the organisation. Leaders will commit to providing adequate resources to support a principled Engagement practice that meaningfully informs decisions and outcomes. Leaders will demonstrate inclusive, respectful, and evidence-based decision-making.

6. Evolving Practices

Learning, Innovation, and Continuous Improvement

The City is committed to continuous learning by regularly reviewing and evaluating its Engagement to identify strengths and areas for improvement. It embraces innovation by remaining open to new tools, creative approaches, and adaptable methods that enhance the effectiveness of Engagement. The City applies lessons learned to build organisational capability and improve future Engagement practices.

Related Documents

Legislation & Local Laws	<i>Local Government Act 1995</i> <i>Privacy and Responsible Information Sharing Act 2024</i> <i>Privacy Act 1988 (we refer to this in CG-13 Confidential Information Policy)</i>
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*Planning and Development (Local Planning Schemes) Regulations 2015
Freedom of Information Act 1992*

Relevant Delegations	Not Applicable
Strategies & Plans	Council Plan 2025-2035 Place Plans Disability Access and Inclusion Plan 2024-2029 Age Friendly Strategy 2021-2026 Youth Strategy 2019-2024
Related Council Policies	CG-13 Confidential Information Policy CG-14 Election Caretaker Period Policy CG-8 Significant Decision Making CG-15 Customer Service Charter CS-15 Disability Access and Inclusion CI-02 Record Keeping CI-05 Artificial Intelligence (AI) Usage Policy CH-06 Work Health and Safety Policy EM-01 Social Media Policy
Procedures, Documents & Forms	City of Karratha Engagement Guidelines. Code of Conduct for Council Members, Committee Members and Candidates Employee Code of Conduct Freedom of Information Act Information Statement Freedom of Information Application City of Karratha Engagement Toolkit

Policy Owner

Directorate	<i>Community Experience</i>
Department	<i>Engagement and Communications</i>

Review Management

Next review due:	February 2028 or in accordance with any changes to the <i>Local Government Act 1995 Regulations</i> prior to this date.
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Version Management

Version	Date	Council Resolution #	Description
1.0	June 2011	OCM-151648	ADOPT CE09 Consultation Policy with amendment
2.0	August 2012	OCM-152174	ADOPT revised CE09 Consultation Policy
3.0	January 2016	OCM-153371	ADOPT CS24 Community Engagement Policy to replace CE09 Consultation Policy
4.0	December 2018	OCM-154236	ADOPT revised CS24 Community Engagement Policy

5.0	<i>January 2021</i>	<i>OCM-154738</i>	<i>ADOPT revised CS24 Community Engagement Policy</i>
6.0	<i>May 2026</i>	<i>OCM260525-09</i>	<i>ADOPT revised CS24 Community Engagement Policy</i>