

**KJA**



engaging solutions

Eurobodalla Shire Council  
Community Engagement Framework

# Framework for Community Engagement

## Background

From the interviews, workshops and research undertaken as part of the situation analysis KJA understands that Council is starting from a position of varied experience and understanding of community engagement practices. We also understand that Council is looking to:

- build a culture of effective engagement across the organisation
- understand the roles and responsibilities of internal stakeholders
- build a relationship of trust with external stakeholders
- deliver a consistent approach to engagement
- deliver this change within the current available resources

The development and implementation of a community engagement framework across the Council will assist in delivering against these priorities.

## Introduction: Why community engagement?

***Eurobodalla Shire Council is committed to including its community in decisions that affect it.***

Eurobodalla's *One Community: Community Strategic Plan* identifies the importance of building and maintaining an engaged and connected community that works together to achieve common goals, where thoughts and ideas are valued, and community members are empowered with knowledge and have the opportunity to participate.

In some cases, there are legislative requirements to consult with the community, but as well as fulfilling a legal obligation, effective community engagement can lead to:

- a better understanding of community needs and expectations
- identifying issues and perspectives that might not otherwise be known
- building positive relationships between Council and its community
- increasing understanding of Council projects and plans
- the community being better informed about Council responsibilities and actions
- community ownership of decisions and outcomes

It is the intent of Council to engage with the community, using effective engagement practices, on major issues and plans affecting the region and activities that have significant impact on the community.

## Purpose of the framework

*A community engagement framework provides guidance for the conduct of best practice community engagement.*

The **Eurobodalla Shire Council Community Engagement Framework** has been designed as a tool for those at Council who have an interest in and responsibility for coordinating, planning, designing, implementing and evaluating community engagement activities.

It is important to remember that community engagement is not a silver bullet solution to ensure that all parties agree with decisions. Ineffective or tokenistic community engagement can be detrimental to the good faith of the community in the long term.

The Community Engagement Framework helps to bring together and weigh up the considerations to deliver community engagement that finds the balance between community, Council and the project.

This framework is created from a preliminary draft of the **Eurobodalla Shire Council Community Engagement Guidelines, Toolkit** and **Community Engagement Policy (2013)** which was developed by Council staff.

## Defining Community Engagement

Community engagement is an umbrella term that encompasses a spectrum of activities, ranging from everyday informal discussions, contact with stakeholders during service delivery, group discussions or meetings, formal consultation processes, through to Council supporting community members in taking action on issues themselves.

So often the terms to describe engagement are used interchangeably. To avoid confusion, Council has developed these simple descriptions:

- **Inform** – keep the community informed by providing objective information, regularly.
- **Consult** – seek feedback from the community on proposals, decisions and analysis.
- **Involve** – public aspirations and concerns are addressed by community participation.
- **Collaborate** – partnering with the community to identify preferred solutions.
- **Empower** – giving the community a role in the decision making process.

## Principles

Eurobodalla Shire Council's *Community Engagement Policy (2013)* identifies these principles to guide the approach to engaging the community:

### **Be open and inclusive**

- Recognise that community participation is a right of all citizens.
- Create and promote opportunities for the community to actively and meaningfully participate in the decision forming process.
- Use engagement activities that are accessible and inclusive to maximise the opportunities for a wide range of community members to participate.

- Commit to informing the community about Council's service delivery, planning and decision making processes.

#### **Generate mutual trust and respect, and be accountable**

- Treat all engagement activity participants with respect.
- Ensure engagement processes are not biased towards any stakeholders.
- Explain how the community's input will be used.
- Be able to demonstrate how the community's input is used.

#### **Engage early and provide information that is clear**

- Engage the community early in a project, wherever practical.
- Clearly communicate the goals of the engagement process.
- Communicate any limitations of the engagement process to participants from the start; including legislative or policy requirements, conflicting community views, budget constraints and any non-negotiable aspects.
- Provide staff and the community with all the information they need to participate meaningfully.

#### **Be considerate and provide feedback**

- Demonstrate that we have considered the community's input and other relevant information before a project decision is made.
- Acknowledge the contributions that participants have made.
- Give feedback to participants at key stages in the project and upon completion.
- Let participants know how they can seek feedback or ask questions in the future.

#### **Value and acknowledge skills and resources**

- Recognise that community members have knowledge and experience to contribute.
- Allocate adequate timeframes and resources to engagement processes.
- Coordinate engagement processes to avoid duplication and wasting resources.
- Provide training opportunities for staff to develop community engagement skills.

## **Components of the Community Engagement Framework**

The Community Engagement Framework is divided into six sections, which can either be read in order or as standalone sections.

1. **Deciding**
2. **Planning**
3. **Resourcing**
4. **Delivering**
5. **Evaluating**
6. **Implementing the framework**

## 1. Deciding

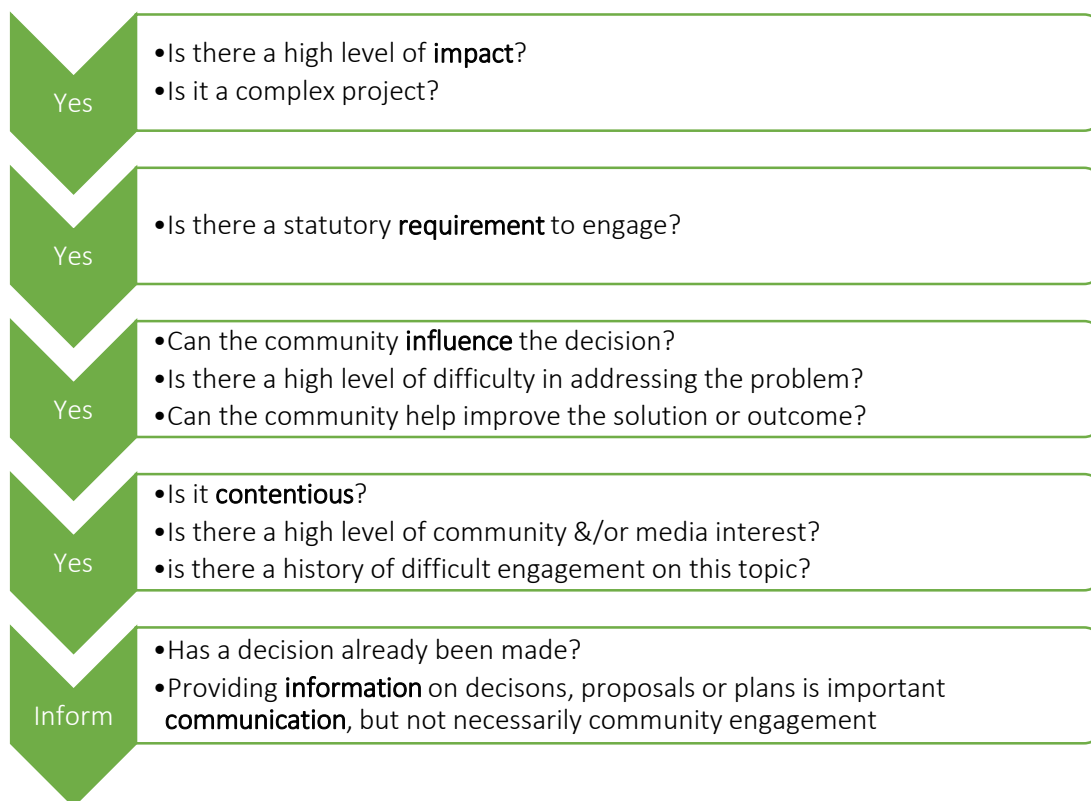
Throughout community engagement there are many decisions to be made: When do you engage? Who do you engage with? What are we engaging about? How are we going to capture the information from the engagement? Where are we going to hold the engagement activity? How long should we engage for?

Some of these decisions are functional and others underpin the very nature of the engagement you are trying to undertake. This section on *Deciding* will look at some of the most important questions you may need to consider.

To help with this process, a ranking tool to assist decision making has been developed to be read in conjunction with the framework.

### 1.1 Do you need to engage?

Determining whether there is a need to engage the community is essential to avoid wasting Council resources and disappointing the community by proposing an engagement process that will not influence an outcome or decision.



In most cases, if you answered yes to one or more of these questions, the answer to the question “Do you need to engage?” will also be yes.

**DECISION MAKING TOOL: Determining engagement level**

STEP 1: Determine engagement level						Ranking
<p><b>What are we planning to do?</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> local playground or area upgrade</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> street furniture installation</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> low impact road changes or upgrades</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> community building upgrades</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> minor amendment to Local Environmental Plan or Development Control Plan</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> changes to a local activity or program e.g. time or location</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> local events, celebrations or festivals</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> licence, lease, activity approval</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> assessing development application</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> improvements to shire wide services</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> upgrade of regional facilities/parks</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> changes to customer services e.g. rates payments, office hours</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> rezoning/reclassifying land</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> weed control and Landcare programs</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> capital works program</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> road sealing programs</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> community events e.g. NAIDOC celebrations, Youth Week etc.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> remove, redevelop or relocate a park/playground</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> change to or loss of a service e.g. local youth services</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Plan of Management</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> New or major amendment to Local Environmental Plan</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Development Control Plan</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> town centre studies, urban/rural strategies</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> changes to car parking areas</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> medium-high impact road closure or upgrades</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Emergency management, e.g. bushfire readiness</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> major change to strategic policy or operations as determined by Council, e.g. service reviews, Delivery Program</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> remove a shire wide service e.g. library, recycling, transport</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> provision of a regional facility e.g. aquatic/sports centre</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> changes or impact to natural bushland or waterway (impacting nature values)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Local Government Election</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Community Strategic Plan</li> </ul>	<p>(Record ranking)</p> <p>_____</p>	
<p>Ranking (tick):</p>	<input type="checkbox"/> 1	<input type="checkbox"/> 2	<input type="checkbox"/> 3	<input type="checkbox"/> 4		<input type="checkbox"/> 5

Is there a statutory requirement to engage?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes, follow the relevant legislation	<input type="checkbox"/> No, record ranking and go to next question
Is there ability or opportunity for community to influence or have input into the decision making?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes, record ranking and go to next question	<input type="checkbox"/> No, go to engagement level = inform
Is this an operational decision?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes, go to engagement level = inform	<input type="checkbox"/> No, record ranking and go to next question

## 1.2 What are the community engagement goals?

The purpose or goals of engaging the community defines what needs to be achieved through the engagement process.

To define the purpose for engaging, consider these questions:

- What are the negotiable aspects of the project or plan that can be influenced by the community?
- What do you want the community engagement to achieve?
- What questions would you like the engagement activities to answer?
- Who are the decision makers?
- What do the decision makers need from engaging the community?

Community engagement goals can include:

- Providing the community with balanced and objective information
- Identifying stakeholder needs
- Getting feedback from stakeholders on a particular option or decision
- Understanding the community's concerns or perspectives
- Providing different ways for community members to give their input
- Reaching a consensus on a proposal or plan
- Supporting the community to develop a sense of ownership in a project or a decision
- Developing mutual trust and positive relationships with stakeholders

A project or action can have more than one goal for engaging the community, and might have different goals at different stages of the project.

Clearly defined goals can be easily communicated to participants, Council and the wider community and can provide a direction for all other aspects of the community engagement process to work toward. Clearly defined goals also form the basis of the evaluation of the engagement. How successful was the engagement process in achieving the engagement goals?

**DECISION MAKING TOOL: What is the aim of your engagement?**

<b>What is the aim of engagement?</b>	To provide the community with balanced and objective information. Can include helping them understand what Council is doing and why by describing the problems, alternatives, opportunities and/or solutions.	To obtain community feedback on a proposal, analysis, alternatives and/or decisions. To consider any submissions from community members.	To work directly with the community throughout the process to ensure that public concerns and aspirations are understood and considered through the project.	To partner with the community in each aspect of the decision making process including the development of alternatives and the identification of the preferred solution.	To place final decision-making and/or delegated budgets in the hands of the public.	(Record ranking) _____
<b>Ranking (tick):</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> 1	<input type="checkbox"/> 2	<input type="checkbox"/> 3	<input type="checkbox"/> 4	<input type="checkbox"/> 5	
<b>What level of influence will the stakeholders have on the decision?</b>	A decision has already been made. The Community Strategic Plan, technical studies or needs analysis has informed Council's direction. Council will keep stakeholders informed.	Council will consider stakeholder input, alongside other research and studies to inform their decision.	Stakeholder views will be sought at multiple stages in the process to inform decisions progressively throughout the project.	Stakeholders will be key in the decision making process.	Stakeholders make the decision.	(Record ranking) _____
<b>Ranking (tick):</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> 1	<input type="checkbox"/> 2	<input type="checkbox"/> 3	<input type="checkbox"/> 4	<input type="checkbox"/> 5	
<b>How would you describe the (LIKELY) impact?</b>	<u>Low</u> Minimal impact on a small section of the local government area	<u>Low – Moderate</u> Minimal impact on entire local government area	<u>Moderate</u> Marginal to moderate impact on a section of, or the entire local government area	<u>Moderate – High</u> Moderate to significant impact on a section of, or the entire local government area	<u>High</u> Significant impact on entire local government area	(Record ranking) _____
<b>Ranking (tick):</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> 1	<input type="checkbox"/> 2	<input type="checkbox"/> 3	<input type="checkbox"/> 4	<input type="checkbox"/> 5	

**RANKING TOTAL:**

*(Add up the score for each row that has a recorded ranking to determine the ranking total)*

\_\_\_\_\_

**Level of community concern or controversy**





## 2. Planning

You will notice the *Planning* section of the framework will ask you to make lots of decisions about how you plan to go about engaging. As you get more information, your decisions will become further refined.

### 2.1 Who are you going to engage with?

Stakeholders vary and can be internal or external to Council; organised groups or individuals; easily identifiable or difficult to reach.

Stakeholders are people or groups who have an interest in or may be impacted by the project.

Identifying all relevant stakeholders is essential to an inclusive and effective engagement process. Ways to identify stakeholders include:

- reviewing records
  - People who have made previous submissions, attended forums, volunteers
  - Residents in particular geographic areas
  - People who have expressed interest in the past
- asking the community
  - Call for expressions of interest
  - Consult with key community members or groups and ask who else they think might be interested
- using in-house knowledge
  - Ask project team members or staff in other sections of Council who have experience or knowledge of the project's subject matter
  - Check mailing lists or lists of attendees at past engagement activities
  - Consider Council staff and Councillors as potential stakeholders as well
- considering hard to reach groups
  - Consider people or groups who might have barriers to participating or might not usually be involved in community engagement activities

## Stakeholders

Any project or decision can have a wide reaching impact across the whole of Eurobodalla, or can be specifically related to a particular group of stakeholders or hard to reach groups. The list below is a guide to help you identify your project's stakeholders.

- Residents
- Rate payers
- Non-resident rate payers
- Visitors
- Committees and Advisory Groups
- Councillors
- Council staff
- Funding providers
- Business chambers
- Seniors
- Young people
- People with disability
- Sporting groups
- Community groups
- Environmental groups
- People with diverse cultural backgrounds
- People who identify as Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander
- Service providers
- Utilities
- Non for profit groups
- Community leaders or spokespeople
- Subject experts
- Local businesses
- Developers
- Schools and education establishments

When you start considering all of the stakeholders you *could* potentially engage with, the list could have tens of thousands of people. It's important to determine if all of these stakeholders are impacted by the project in the same way, have influence over the project in the same way and need to be communicated with in the same manner. Detailed stakeholder mapping can assist in capturing this information for further decision making.

**STAKEHOLDER MAPPING TOOL:**

Stakeholder /group	Potential stakeholder concerns	Impact on stakeholder	Adding value to the project	Influence over the project	Key Contacts	Preferred contact method
<i>Individuals, sectors or groups</i>	<i>What concerns might the stakeholder have about the project or outcome</i>	<i>What is the project's likely level of impact or consequence for the stakeholder</i>	<i>What can the stakeholder bring to the project</i>	<i>What influence can the stakeholder have over the project</i>	<i>Contact details for key stakeholder representatives</i>	<i>What's the best way to reach this stakeholder</i>

**DECISION MAKING TOOL: Who are you going to engage with?**

After determining the ranking total, consider the following questions.

While they may not increase the rating total, they may impact which engagement methods to use and what key messages to share with the community.

If there is any uncertainty when answering the following questions, refer to the internal community engagement panel for further discussion.

<p><b>Are there sensitivities associated with the project?</b></p>	<p><input type="checkbox"/> Political <input type="checkbox"/> Cultural <input type="checkbox"/> Media</p>	
<p><b>Is there a potential impact to community values? (tick all that apply)</b></p>	<p><input type="checkbox"/> Local identity <input type="checkbox"/> Freedom of association or freedom of speech <input type="checkbox"/> Land ownership <input type="checkbox"/> Significant social or economic impact <input type="checkbox"/> Environment <input type="checkbox"/> Disability</p>	<p><input type="checkbox"/> Culture <input type="checkbox"/> Health <input type="checkbox"/> Firearms <input type="checkbox"/> Religion <input type="checkbox"/> Gender equality <input type="checkbox"/> Other _____</p>
<p><b>Which stakeholders will we engage? (tick all that apply)</b></p>	<p><input type="checkbox"/> All community members <input type="checkbox"/> Interest groups <input type="checkbox"/> Ratepayers (including non-residents) <input type="checkbox"/> Residents (all or specific target groups) <input type="checkbox"/> Community groups and organisations, volunteers <input type="checkbox"/> Visitors <input type="checkbox"/> Agencies and peak bodies <input type="checkbox"/> Council staff <input type="checkbox"/> Councillors <input type="checkbox"/> Local MPs</p>	<p><input type="checkbox"/> State and Federal MPs <input type="checkbox"/> Advisory, sunset, management and steering committees or groups <input type="checkbox"/> Traffic/emergency management committees <input type="checkbox"/> Businesses, investors, developers <input type="checkbox"/> Specific funding providers <input type="checkbox"/> Media (print, radio, online, social) <input type="checkbox"/> Education and employment bodies <input type="checkbox"/> Chambers of commerce and business groups <input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____</p>
<p><b>Have you considered any barriers that could limit people with disability from participating and taken action to remove those barriers wherever possible?</b></p>		<p><input type="checkbox"/> Yes, go to next step      <input type="checkbox"/> No, identify barriers and remove wherever possible</p>

## 2.2 What is the likely level of impact or consequence for stakeholders?

A project's level of impact relates to how significantly a proposal or action will affect community stakeholders.

These guidelines define the degree of impact in five levels, based on the assumption that any project, issue, service or action will have some impact on the community:

Impact level	Description/criteria	Examples
<b>Level 1: (LOW)</b> Low impact, Township/ neighbourhood (everything is 'local')	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>small change or improvement to a facility or service at a local level and low risk of conflict at the local level.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>local playground or area upgrade</li> <li>street furniture installation</li> <li>low impact road changes or upgrades</li> <li>community building upgrades</li> <li>minor amendment to Local Environmental Plan or Development Control Plan</li> <li>changes to a local activity or program e.g. time or location</li> <li>local events, celebrations or festivals</li> <li>licence, lease, activity approval</li> <li>assessing development application</li> </ul>
<b>Level 2: (LOW - MODERATE)</b> Low to moderate impact, all of Eurobodalla	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>recurring large scale programs and activities that impact across all or a large scale of Eurobodalla, but have a lower level or potential for controversy or concern.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>improvements to shire wide services</li> <li>upgrade of regional facilities/parks</li> <li>changes to customer services e.g. rate payments, office hours</li> <li>rezoning/reclassifying land</li> <li>weed control and Landcare programs</li> <li>capital works program</li> <li>road sealing programs</li> <li>community events e.g. NAIDOC celebrations, Youth Week, Volunteers and Seniors Week</li> </ul>
<b>Level 3: (MODERATE)</b> Marginal to moderate impact, specific township/ neighbourhood or all of Eurobodalla	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>marginal to moderate level of real or perceived impact or risk to a local area, community or group or all of Eurobodalla</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>remove, redevelop or relocate a park/playground</li> <li>changes to or loss of a service e.g. local youth services</li> <li>Plan of Management</li> <li>new or major amendment to Local Environment Plan</li> <li>Development Control Plan</li> <li>town centre studies, urban/rural strategies</li> <li>changes to car parking areas</li> <li>medium-high impact road closure or updates</li> <li>Emergency management e.g. bushfire</li> </ul>
<b>Level 4: (MODERATE - HIGH)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>high level of real or perceived impact or risk to a local area, community or group</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>major change to strategic policy or operations as determined by Council e.g. service reviews, Delivery Program</li> </ul>

<p><b>High impact, Specific township/ neighbourhood</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• potential for a high level of public interest or controversy or division within the community</li> <li>• loss of or significant change to a local facility or service</li> <li>• significant expenditure or allocation of resources</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• remove a shire wide service e.g. library, recycling, transport</li> <li>• provision of a regional facility e.g. aquatic/sports centre</li> <li>• changes or impact to natural bushland or waterway (impacting nature values)</li> </ul>
<p><b>Level 5: (HIGH) High impact, all of Eurobodalla</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• high level of real or perceived impact on the whole or a large part of Eurobodalla Shire</li> <li>• significant impact on attributes of high value to the community (environment/heritage/landscape)</li> <li>• impact on health, safety or wellbeing of the community</li> <li>• high degree of community interest</li> <li>• potential impact on State or regional strategies or direction</li> <li>• significant expenditure and/or reallocation of resources</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Local Government Election</li> <li>• Community Strategic Plan</li> </ul>

**DECISION MAKING TOOL: Describing Impacts**

<b>How would you describe the (LIKELY) impact?</b>	<u>Low</u> Minimal impact on a small section of the local government area	<u>Low – Moderate</u> Minimal impact on entire local government area	<u>Moderate</u> Marginal to moderate impact on a section of, or the entire local government area	<u>Moderate – High</u> Moderate to significant impact on a section of, or the entire local government area	<u>High</u> Significant impact on entire local government area	(Record ranking) _____
<b>Ranking (tick):</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> 1	<input type="checkbox"/> 2	<input type="checkbox"/> 3	<input type="checkbox"/> 4	<input type="checkbox"/> 5	

**Level of community concern or controversy** 

### 2.3 What level of community engagement?

The Community Engagement Framework does not prescribe exactly how the community should be engaged for every project or issue. Rather, Council staff determine the most appropriate engagement approach, deciding on the level of community participation based on the nature of the issue, project, plan or decision to be made.

This table describes five levels of participation, in many cases, more than one level of participation and technique will be required to achieve the engagement goals.

	<b>Inform</b>	<b>Consult</b>	<b>Involve</b>	<b>Collaborate</b>	<b>Empower</b>
<b>Why are we doing this</b>	To provide the public with balanced and objective information to assist them in understanding solutions, alternatives, opportunities and/or problems.	To obtain public feedback on analysis, alternatives.	To work directly with the public throughout the process to ensure that public concerns and aspirations are consistently understood and considered.	To partner with the public in each aspect of the decision including the development of alternatives and the identification of the preferred solution.	To place final decision-making and/or devolved budgets in the hands of the public.
<b>What will we say? What will we do?</b>	We will keep you informed.	We will keep you informed, listen to acknowledge concerns and provide feedback on how public input influenced the decision.	We will work with you to ensure that your concerns and aspirations are directly reflected in the alternatives developed and provide feedback on how public input influenced the decision.	We will look to you for direct advice and innovation in formulating solutions and incorporate your advice and recommendations into the decisions to the maximum extent possible.	We will implement what you decide.



**DECISION MAKING TOOL: Describing the level of engagement**

STEP 2: Determine engagement method					
Ranking total	4 – 6	6 – 8	9 – 15	16 - 17	18 - 20
How will we describe the level of engagement?	<b>Inform</b> We will keep stakeholders informed.	<b>Consult</b> We will inform stakeholders, listen to and acknowledge their views and provide feedback on how stakeholder input has influenced the decision.	<b>Involve</b> We will work with stakeholders to ensure that stakeholder views and aspirations are directly reflected in the alternatives developed and provide feedback on how stakeholder input has influenced the decision.	<b>Collaborate</b> We will look to stakeholders for direct advice and innovation in formulating solutions and incorporate that advice and recommendations into the decisions to the maximum extent possible.	<b>Empower</b> We will implement what stakeholders decide.
What will the engagement consist of?	Council will deliver information to stakeholders. Communication is one-way. Often the community is informed about a decision that has been made and relevant action or activities scheduled to take place.	Council obtains feedback from the community regarding views, solutions, alternatives and proposals to inform and influence the outcome of Council decisions and actions.	Council will design a participatory process to identify community concerns, aspirations and issues and ensure they are considered prior to decision making.	Council works together with the community to identify preferred solutions and alternatives, once issues and interests are well understood.	Refers to community development and community capacity building initiatives whereby Council provides opportunities and resources for communities to contribute their skills and talents.
What tools and information will we use?  <i>This list should be used as a guide only. Not all activities will be appropriate for all projects, some activities from other columns or new ideas may also be appropriate.</i>	<input type="checkbox"/> Website <input type="checkbox"/> Media release, radio, social media, email newsletter <input type="checkbox"/> Newspaper, radio paid ad <input type="checkbox"/> Letter to directly affected stakeholders <input type="checkbox"/> Community information session, stall, or event <input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____	<input type="checkbox"/> Website <input type="checkbox"/> Media release, radio, social media, email newsletter <input type="checkbox"/> Newspaper noticeboard <input type="checkbox"/> Newspaper, radio paid ad <input type="checkbox"/> Letterbox drop to directly affected stakeholders <input type="checkbox"/> Letter or email notification or invitation to local stakeholder groups <input type="checkbox"/> Stakeholder briefings <input type="checkbox"/> Community information session, stall, or event <input type="checkbox"/> Feedback form or survey <input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____	<input type="checkbox"/> Website <input type="checkbox"/> Media release, radio, social media, email newsletter <input type="checkbox"/> Letterbox drop to directly affected stakeholders <input type="checkbox"/> Letter or email notification or invitation to local stakeholder groups <input type="checkbox"/> Newspaper, radio paid ad <input type="checkbox"/> Stakeholder briefings <input type="checkbox"/> Community information session, stall, or event <input type="checkbox"/> Feedback form, survey or interviews <input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____	<input type="checkbox"/> Website <input type="checkbox"/> Media release, radio, social media, email newsletter <input type="checkbox"/> Letterbox drop to directly affected stakeholders <input type="checkbox"/> Letter or email notification or invitation to local stakeholder groups <input type="checkbox"/> Newspaper, radio paid ad <input type="checkbox"/> Stakeholder briefings <input type="checkbox"/> Deliberative process or Citizens Jury <input type="checkbox"/> Workshop or forum <input type="checkbox"/> Feedback form, survey or interviews <input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____	<input type="checkbox"/> Website <input type="checkbox"/> Media release, radio, social media, email newsletter <input type="checkbox"/> Letterbox drop to directly affected stakeholders <input type="checkbox"/> Letter or email notification or invitation to local stakeholder groups <input type="checkbox"/> Newspaper, radio paid ad <input type="checkbox"/> Deliberative process or Citizens Jury <input type="checkbox"/> Election / voting process <input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____

**Engagement budget and resources**



### 3. Resourcing

Resources are the things, people, space, time and information you need to build your community engagement plan and deliver community engagement activities to meet the goals you set in the beginning. Resourcing can also be the boundary on how far a project can go and how much engagement can be done.

A workshop with a few key stakeholders can sometimes be more expensive than a Facebook post to the whole community. Both are very valid tools of engagement and both have their own strengths. Deciding which resources to use when is your next challenge.

#### 3.1 Choose your engagement methods and tools

The Decision Making Tool is intended as a quick reference guide for different types of engagement activities, across the five levels of engagement. Once you have selected your level of engagement, a list of tools appropriate for that level are listed below. Select which tools are best for the project.

It includes common activities that Council uses to engage the community and identifies how suitable each activity is for different combinations of impact and engagement levels.

These and other activities are explained in detail in the *Eurobodalla Community Engagement Toolkit*, which is in development to support the planning of specific engagement activities once you have identified ones that are suitable for your project and available resources.

1. Find the column that matches the impact level that you identified for your project
2. Look through the column and consider the different types of activities that are listed up to and including your project's engagement level.

### 3.2 Drafting your engagement plan

Writing down your engagement plan, helps communicate the steps and process internally, it helps your organise your thoughts, it also help identify gaps in information.

Community engagement goals:					
Timing/schedule	Key messages	Stakeholders/target audience	Method/activity	Tasks/milestones	Engagement Level
<i>Intended timing of tasks</i>	<i>Information that stakeholders need in order to participate meaningfully and information that Council needs to communicate</i>	<i>Internal and external stakeholders that will be involved/targeted</i>	<i>Planned method of engagement for your stakeholder group/s</i>	<i>Tasks that must be completed or achieved</i>	<i>Which of the engagement levels the activity upholds</i>

#### 4. Delivering

Start engaging!

#### DECISION MAKING TOOL: Implementing the engagement program

##### STEP 3: Implementing the engagement program

PHASE	ACTIVITIES				MESSAGING FRAMEWORK
<b>Prepare</b>	Establish Project Team	Workshop with project team around approach, issues, stakeholders and messaging.	Write down your plan	Allocate resources	<p><b>Tell them what you are going to do.</b></p> <p><i>Example: Council will be asking for your feedback on improvements to our parks. Your feedback will help Council develop a Park Improvement Plan. The plan will tell Council and the community how and when our parks will be maintained and improved.</i></p>
	Draft key messages	Align engagement activities with appropriate project phases	Prepare communications	Schedule all engagements and communication	
<b>Engage</b>	Deliver engagement activities	Engage with and disseminate information to stakeholder groups	Analyse feedback	Refine approach as needed	<p><b>Tell them what you are doing.</b></p> <p><i>Example: Have your say about improvements to parks in your area by completing our survey.</i></p>
<b>Close the loop</b>	Document the engagement and the outcomes	Report back to stakeholders about how their input informed the outcome	Thank stakeholders for their involvement	Evaluate the project and engagement program	<p><b>Tell them what you have done and how you used any feedback.</b></p> <p><i>Example: Council conducted a survey about where improvements should be made. The feedback we received has informed the development of a Park Improvement Plan. The plan tells Council and the community how and when our parks will be maintained and improved.</i></p>

Ongoing liaison with Project Team and reference to Engagement Plan to guide decision making



## 5. Evaluating

Evaluating the effectiveness of the community engagement process can help to improve Council's overall approach to engagement by identifying what went well and what can be improved in the future.

Some broad items to consider when evaluating the effectiveness of an engagement process are:

- Did the community feel that Council was genuine in its community engagement goals and efforts?
- Was the process implemented as planned? If not, what changed and why?
- Were the goals of a particular activity met?
- Have the overall community engagement aims been met?
- Did the input from stakeholders contribute to a better overall outcome?
- Has Council gained a better understanding of the community's perspective on the issue or project?
- If a final decision was made, was it generally accepted by the public?
- What challenges or lessons have been identified throughout the process?
- How significant is 'number of people' who participate? Numbers don't necessarily equal effective, but still relevant?

It can also be useful to evaluate the community engagement plan and process against Eurobodalla Shire Council's principles of community engagement in the *Community Engagement Policy (2013)*:

### 5.1 Be open and inclusive

- Did participants feel that the engagement process was accessible and inclusive?
- Did the engagement process include a balanced range of community members and different views?
- Did participants feel that the process was flexible enough to address issues as they arose?

### 5.2 Generate mutual trust and respect and be accountable

- Did participants feel that they were treated with respect and dignity?
- Did participants feel that the process fairly considered their input?
- Can Council demonstrate that promises to the public were upheld?

### 5.3 Engage early and provide information that is clear

- Did Council make the promise to the public clear for all engagement activities?
- Did Council clearly communicate any limitations about what the community's input could influence?
- Did participants feel that they understood the aims and process?
- Did Council seek community engagement early in the project?
- Did participants get all the information they needed to provide meaningful input?

### 5.4 Be considerate and provide feedback

- Did participants feel that Council listened and allowed all participants to have their say?
- Did Council provide feedback to participants at key stages of the project?

- Is Council able to show how community input has been taken into consideration in decision making?

#### **5.5 Value and acknowledge skills and resources**

- Did Council allocate the timeframes and resources that were needed?
- As a result of this project, have any staff training or development needs been identified?

#### **5.6 Provide post-project feedback to participants**

Providing feedback informs participants about how their input was used and how it impacted the decision or the project's outcome. It also lets them know that Council values their input and experience.

Providing ongoing feedback throughout the project should be considered in the Community Engagement Plan. If participants receive information throughout the course of a project then they are more likely to accept a final decision or outcome.

At the end of the community engagement process, it is important that participants feel that the process was worthwhile and that the promise to the public has been upheld. This can encourage people to participate in engagement activities in the future, and can have a positive impact on the way that the community perceives Council.

Ways of providing feedback will vary depending on the type of project and who participated. Some items to consider for providing feedback are:

- Include plans for providing post-project feedback in your Community Engagement Plan
- Provide information about the outcome or decision
- Provide information that addresses the community engagement aims and the promise to the public
- Provide feedback in a timely manner
- Provide information through credible channels

Providing feedback is also relevant for internal stakeholders such as your Project Team and Director. Be sure to complete the post project feedback report in your Project Management Guide, as well as any other reporting requirements that are relevant to your particular project.

## 6. Tips for an Effective Community Engagement Plan

1.	Once you have decided to engage, print out a blank community engagement plan. You can fill out the engagement plan as you work through the framework.
2.	Write down your engagement goal on your community engagement plan. As this will form the basis of your engagement plan, it's important to achieve internal alignment and sign off for this goal.
3.	A good plan will change and adapt. Budgets, timeframes, resources, internal support, priorities and the number of stakeholders involved will all influence other elements in the engagement plan.
4.	Stakeholder mapping will help you understand the size and scale of your stakeholders, their issues and preferred contact methods.
5.	Not all stakeholders will experience the same level of impact at the same time. If you expect this will change, make note in the community engagement plan and prepare for the change.
6.	Internal alignment on the level of impact, the level of engagement and how much community stakeholders can contribute to decision making can be challenging. Once you get to this stage in the engagement framework, it's worthwhile checking in to make sure your internal stakeholders are on the same page.
7.	Don't get locked into doing something the same way because you've always done it that way.
8.	Consider your stakeholders' preferred communication method when matching your communication methods/tools to the stakeholder groups.
9.	Plan when in the process when you will let participants know how their feedback will be used.
10.	Remember to let participants know when and how a decision will be made.
11.	Keep your internal stakeholders up to date with the progress of the engagement plan, especially if elements change.

Eurobodalla Shire Council  
Outcomes Report

January 2016



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## 1. Executive Summary

Eurobodalla Council is committed to community and stakeholder engagement and is performing at a high level with regard to its delivery of engagement opportunities and proactive communications.

Despite this commitment and demonstrable performance, there has been frustration with persistent negative media coverage, vocal community opposition and a perception of mistrust in some pockets of the community. In acknowledging there may be strategies available to address the situation, Council engaged KJA to develop a Community Engagement Framework.

The following Objectives were agreed with Council's Project Team in the development of the Project Plan:

- Define a way forward to improve relationships and build trust between Council and Council's stakeholders
- Establish a renewed, consistent approach to community engagement and communication services for Eurobodalla Shire Council
- Explore the strategic direction, and review and utilise existing resources
- Capacity building

Through a broad range of discussions with Council's stakeholders, a range of stakeholder concerns were identified including but not limited to:

- Council's ability to deliver services in an effective way;
- Council's transparency in its dealings with the community;
- The appropriateness or applicability of Council's communication and engagement strategy;
- The community's understanding of Council's role and the role of elected representatives;
- The motivation of some vocal and oppositional stakeholders;
- Council's awareness and ability to navigate the full complexity and breadth of its stakeholder environment; and
- Council's ability to engage effectively with key stakeholders.

These stakeholder issues were considered in the context of Council's current engagement program and operating environment to develop a range of tools that constitute this Outcomes Report:

- Guiding Principles
- Engagement Charter
- Recommendations and Key Actions (Findings and Responses)
- Community Engagement Framework
- Decision Making Tool

The Engagement Charter is provided as appendices to this document to be used by Council Staff to form the basis of consultation with the community and stakeholders. The purpose of the Charter is to:

- Describe Council's relationship with stakeholders
- Clarify the terminology, and the responsibilities of those involved
- Better educate all stakeholders on the benefits and opportunities of the engagement process with a view to a shared process and shared outcome.

The Community Engagement Framework and Decision Making Tool are provided as appendices to this document for the information of Council staff. These tools are important to:

- Build a culture of effective engagement across the organisation;
- Understand the roles and responsibilities of internal stakeholders;

- Build a relationship of trust with external stakeholders;
- Deliver a consistent approach to engagement; and
- Deliver change within the current available resources.

Council's next step is to conduct an engagement process with the community to confirm the community's support. This engagement will focus on the Charter of Responsibilities (including the Principles). This is also an opportunity to strengthen community relationships and lead an educative discussion about engagement.

## 2. Background

Eurobodalla Shire Council is a very active Council, with a strong history of community engagement and proactive communication. In mid-2015, Eurobodalla Council identified a need for assistance with establishing and driving a renewed, consistent approach to community engagement and communication to address a perceived pattern of negative community sentiment identified in community engagements and local media coverage.

Council is active in stakeholder and community engagement and is often the subject of media and stakeholder concern and attention. This attention has also included targeted campaigns of opposition, most recently targeting Council's application for a special rate variation.

Council engaged KJA to develop a Situation Analysis and a Framework for Stakeholder Engagement and Strategic Communications with an aim to strengthen Council's relationship with the community and maximise the shared benefits of engagement opportunities and communication programs and therefore define a way forward to improve relationships and build trust between Council and Council's stakeholders.

## 3. Strategic Approach

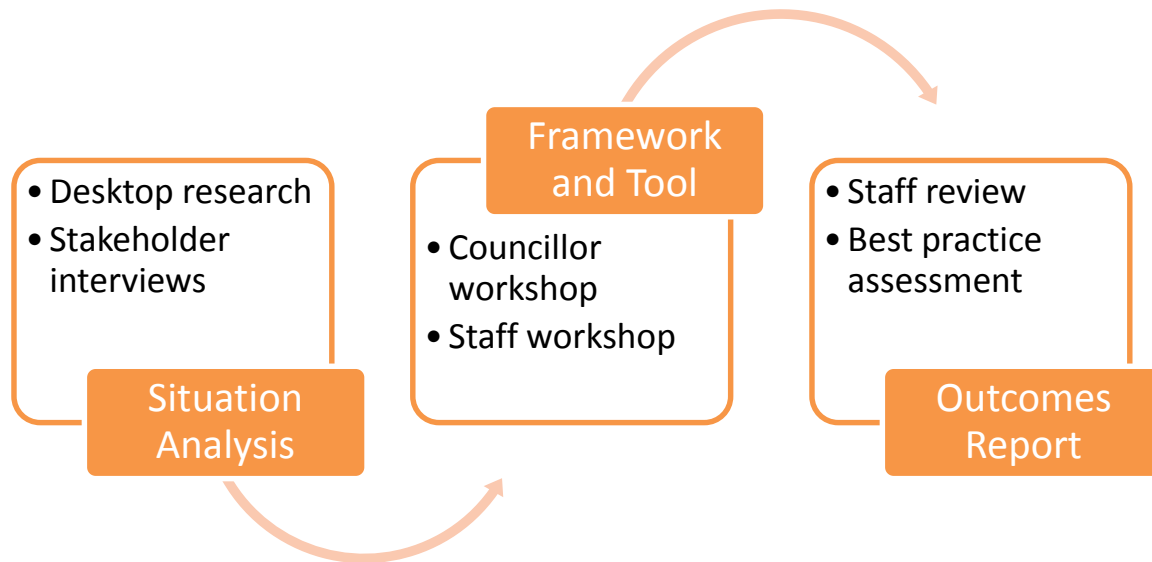
As part of the program to develop a Situation Analysis and a Framework for Stakeholder Engagement and Strategic Communication, KJA conducted several activities to help gain an understanding of stakeholder sentiment and perceptions in relation to Council's activities and relationships within the community.

Activities undertaken included a series of internal and external stakeholder interviews, desktop research and review, and engagement workshops with Councillors and staff.

The strategic approach was agreed with the Council project team to address the overarching project objectives:

- Define a way forward to improve relationships and build trust between Council and Council's stakeholders
- Establish a renewed, consistent approach to community engagement and communication services for Eurobodalla Shire Council
- Provide opportunities during the project for capacity building

The project was based on primary information gathering – interviews and workshops. This approach was agreed to ensure that the final products meet the requirements of Eurobodalla Council operating in their own, unique stakeholder environment.



***The project provided three key deliverables***

**Phase 1: Situation analysis**

A Situation Analysis was developed to capture stakeholder perspectives on the current operating context for Eurobodalla Shire Council and to provide a stakeholder view of Council’s performance, operations and activities. The Situation Analysis was designed to:

- Provide an understanding of the current state
- Identify risks and issues and explore stakeholder expectations in regard to Council’s response
- Explore mitigation measures
- Inform the development of the Framework

It was formed through desktop research and a series of interviews with a range of stakeholders.

On the 22<sup>nd</sup> and 23<sup>rd</sup> of July, KJA conducted interviews with a sample of stakeholders identified by Eurobodalla Shire Council. The purpose of the interview process was to understand the views and perspectives of stakeholders in regard to Council’s operations and community relationships in a one-on-one environment.

Stakeholders interviewed included representatives from:

- Each Chamber of Commerce within the Shire: Batemans Bay, Narooma and Moruya
- Business Advisory Committee
- Audit Committee
- Disability Advisory Committee (DAC)
- Eurobodalla Ratepayers Association (ERA)
- Eurobodalla Concerned Citizens Association (ECC)
- Council administrative staff
- Council operational staff
- Council’s Executive Leadership Team

Key stakeholders were invited to participate in the interviews via an introductory email, which introduced KJA's role in the process, outlined the purpose of the interview and explained the context of the engagement in relation to the development of the Situation Analysis and Framework.

Prior to conducting the interviews, KJA undertook desktop research to optimise the outcomes of the process. High level interview questions were used only to guide discussions, and varied depending on the stakeholder and flow of the conversation.

The outcomes of these discussions and an understanding of the operating environment gleaned from media and document reviews in a period of desktop research were used to inform development of the Framework and Tool.

### **Phase 2: Framework and Tool**

On 18 August 2015, a two hour workshop was held with Councillors from the Eurobodalla Shire Council to understand the current state of communications and engagement and discuss the preferred way forward. Group discussions were focused on the following topics:

- How Council performs in Stakeholder Engagement
- Consultation approach
- Tools and Techniques
- Council's role
- Discussion around IAP2 Spectrum
- Engagement Framework

Following the Councillor workshop, an afternoon session was held with Council staff involved in communications and stakeholder engagement. This was an opportunity to explore what's working and what can improve in Council's engagements. It was also used as a capacity building opportunity, particularly around the exploration of engagement theory and techniques, and a review of the IAP2 spectrum.

These workshops helped to identify engagement issues from the perspective of stakeholders internal to Council i.e. staff and Councillors.

From these workshops, a range of outcomes were identified including:

- Councillors consider community and stakeholder engagement to be an important tool that contributes to decision making and effective community participation
- Councillors consider that community engagement supports their relationship with the community and the Councillor's effectiveness as community leaders
- Councillors encourage best practice engagement
- Councillors consider that support of a robust and effective engagement process will help to allay community and stakeholder discontent

Councillors and staff shared their experiences of community and stakeholder engagement. Councillors and staff identified a range of improvements including:

- Being clear with the community what consultation is
- Being clear with the community about the level of influence the community can have
- Establishing clarity about timeframes and communicating that timing to stakeholders – when to engage, length of time available to plan adequately and its impact on resourcing
- Correcting misinformation and communicating changes in Council’s messaging

The staff workshop was also an opportunity for capacity building. The team agreed to reconvene two or three times over the next month to discuss and action:

- Review stakeholder mud map and identify any additional stakeholders
- Considering the stakeholder map, prepare a case study of a future, current or previous community engagement project and detail the approach you would use to target the impacted stakeholders and understand their issues
- Review the draft Community Engagement Toolkit prepared by Council staff, and identify the tools that
  - are currently being used by Council
  - are working well
  - are not working well
- Review spreadsheet of upcoming community engagement activities and priorities and consider using as an ongoing tool
- Agree process for scheduling community engagement activities internally e.g. outlook calendar

In addition to the development of a Framework, the subsequent consultation with Council staff suggested that a Decision Making Tool was also required. Both the Framework and the Decision Making tool has been socialised with staff and revised based on their application of the tool to projects both delivered and proposed.

### **Phase 3: Outcomes Report**

In consideration of all the engagements and information gathering associated with this project, this Report is designed to capture and document the findings and recommended responses.

## 4. Findings and Responses

### 4.1 Strengths

There are many engagement activities that Council is doing well. These activities should be maintained and include:

Strengths	Notes
Initiate and facilitate community groups' meetings	Two way discussion between Council staff and interested groups By engaging with specific groups, Council is able to identify issues of interest and building relationships
Forums with guest presenters	Guest speakers add credibility and reduce tension
Information stalls, information sessions and "Meet us at the Markets"	Work well when presenting a specific issue or targeting a specific audience. These activities provide an opportunity for Council staff with a specific project to engage with the community. These information stalls and sessions encourage community members to continue their engagement with the Council by signing up to the e-newsletter
Targeted stakeholder letters	Letters to specific interest groups eg. sporting clubs or business association
Media release, printed newsletter <i>Living In Eurobodalla</i> , e-newsletter <i>Eurobodalla News</i> , online feedback form, paid advertising, website and social media	All provide relatively inexpensive, effective communications where Council is able to direct the conversation and ensure key messages are delivered.
Proactive media	Media releases are provided in a timely manner and targeted to local outlets
Inclusion of community stakeholders on committees	These roles are important commitments. More opportunities could be identified.



## 4.2 Opportunities for improvement

There are several opportunities for Council to improve engagement. These include:

Opportunities	Notes	Improvements
<b>Management of Information</b>	Several Council processes require information to be made public before consultation can start. Other processes do not allow information from meetings to be made publicly available for other stakeholders. This inconsistency is confusing and problematic for internal and external stakeholders. Some process have legislative requirements, and others are governed by best practice. Subsequently, there are different timeframes in a project lifecycle where input can be received.	Communicate with clarity about the drivers for the process and the opportunities for stakeholder engagement.
<b>Advisory committee and Reference groups</b>	These groups are often established without all parties understanding the role and objectives and are influenced by personalities and agendas.	Utilise Advisory and Reference groups proactively Deliver induction program for all advisory committee members Consider an advisory committee conference on an annual basis
<b>Community information sessions, displays, public exhibition</b>	Often expensive and difficult to resource, sessions have been unclear in their purpose. Other issues include unpredictable attendance, and not reaching a new or different audience and an inconsistent approach.	Plan sessions as opportunities for community engagement - set clear objectives and provide feedback  Consider engagement of professional facilitator
<b>Internal communications</b>	Inconsistencies in internal communication are visible to external stakeholders	Ownership of processes is an important component in stakeholder engagement to ensure consistent carriage of stakeholder issues
	Stakeholder engagement is considered by some staff as an additional task	Promote stakeholder engagement as a key function for all Council staff. Stakeholder engagement is about maintaining long term relationships with stakeholders.
	Deliver consistent engagement	Apply Framework  Engage all staff in the role and benefits of stakeholder engagement

Opportunities	Notes	Improvements
	Volume of internal communication (e.g. emails, newsletters) means staff may not engage in the story of the project	Manage internal communications to minimise information overload. Apply hierarchy to communications
	Operational areas must work together	<p>Include operational staff in communications planning. Promote cross functional teams to anticipate and address issues</p> <p>Information about each project be made readily available to all staff (e.g. web or intranet published) for easy access</p>
External engagement and communications	Engagement and consultation processes lack clarity and transparency	<p>Apply Framework</p> <p>Promote application of Framework</p>
	Council does not enjoy broad media support	<p>Continue to promote Council activities and deliverables.</p> <p>Link proactive media to demonstrable achievements</p> <p>Correct misinformation</p> <p>Provide full and accessible information on Council's website and utilise stakeholder channels to support Council's message eg promote Council stories to local member for inclusion in newsletter</p> <p>Apply three-phase story telling – tell people what you are going to do, tell people what you are doing, tell people what you did</p>
	Stakeholder context must be fully considered	<p>Consider Councils stakeholder context in all and any communication and/or engagement. Three distinct communities can be identified, and should be considered when engaging. Leverage key stakeholder relationships to share information.</p> <p>Engage stakeholders in the right order.</p> <p>Engage stakeholders to inform Councils decision.</p>
Council	Council meetings are not always a positive, community experience	Promote understanding of Council processes
	Council is delivering communications, however there are issues with alignment and consistency	Address suspicion in regard to lack of transparency

Opportunities	Notes	Improvements
	<p>Political machinations amongst elected Councillors affects community perspectives of operational ability of Council</p>	<p>Councillors and Senior Executive staff should adhere to the NSW Office of Local Government’s Model Code of Conduct 2013 at all times. The Code requires staff carry out their duty honestly and with a reasonable degree of care and diligence, and to act in a way that enhances public confidence in the integrity of Local Government</p>
<p><b>Consultation</b></p>	<p>Need to be clear that consultation is not a vote</p> <p>Timing is an issue – when to engage, length of time available to plan adequately, resourcing</p> <p>Community thinks of consultation and engagement as ‘we (Council) will do what you say</p> <p>Sometimes we over consult</p> <p>Constant consultation makes us look like we don’t deliver</p> <p>Appropriateness of timing for events (e.g. 2pm on a Thursday = one attendee )</p> <p>Difficulties around planning proposals – community say “you’ve already decided” but legislation requires proposal to be prepared before engagement</p>	<p>Apply Framework</p> <p>Communicate application of the Framework</p> <p>Coordinate consultation and identify opportunities for parallel or group consultations or activities to save time/resources</p> <p>Use consistent language ie inform, consult, involve, collaborate and empower</p> <p>Understand if there is flexibility around outcomes before asking for feedback</p> <p>Apply the framework</p> <p>Engage early with Councillors on the consultation/engagement/information opportunities for identified projects</p> <p>Arrange consultation events to maximise stakeholder participation</p> <p>Show the community Council has listened</p> <p>Anticipate the issues and how to respond before consulting</p> <p>Provide clear guidelines for consultation</p> <p>Provide feedback on how engagement influenced the final outcomes</p> <p>Implement Framework</p>
<p><b>Promote relationships</b></p>	<p>Relationships are two-way</p>	<p>Share information. Show detail</p> <p>Provide feedback</p> <p>Promote information to committee members to engage</p> <p>Use reference group members as champions</p>

## 5. Tools and Actions

### 5.1 Principles

The following engagement principles have been drafted in response to the feedback outlined above. These principles helped to inform the development of the Community Engagement Framework.

Council's communication and engagement should adopt the following guiding principles:

- Be transparent
- Be proactive
- Be available
- Be genuine
- Be consistent

### 5.2 Stakeholder Engagement Framework and Decision Making Tool

The Framework for Stakeholder Engagement and Strategic Communications was developed to identify a best practice, collaborative approach to ensure the delivery of consistent communications and engagement, and effectively utilise existing resources. The Draft Community Engagement Guidelines and toolkit developed by Council staff assisted in the design of the Framework.

The Framework was developed to:

- Provide clarity around resourcing and staff responsibilities for communications and community engagement;
- Provide clarity around engagement methods and tools and detail opportunities for community contribution to Council engagements and consultation; and
- Guide Council on strategies for mitigating and managing controversial issues going forward

The Framework will be used to inform the Community Engagement Plan (required for the four-year review of the Community Strategic Plan) and guide future engagement between Eurobodalla Shire Council and the community.

The Engagement Framework and Decision Making Tool can be found in the Appendices section of this report.

### 5.3 Stakeholders

Council's understanding of its stakeholder environment requires improvement. Stakeholders include, but may not be limited to:

- Councillors
- Council staff
- Community
- Residents, all or specific target groups
- Rate Payers (including non-residents)
- Local business, investors, developers
- Tourists/ Visitors
- Community groups and organisations, volunteers
- Agencies and peak bodies
- Environment peak bodies
- Education and employment bodies
- Advisory, sunset, management and steering committees
- Chambers of Commerce and business groups
- Local media – print, radio and online including social/blogs
- Specific funding providers
- Regional Development Authority
- Interest groups including Eurobodalla Concerned Citizens and Eurobodalla Ratepayers Association
- Local Member of Parliament
- NSW and Australian Members of Parliament
- State and Federal Government administration

## 6. Outcomes and next steps

KJA has developed the following steps to assist in improving Eurobodalla Shire Council's communication and engagement with their internal and external stakeholders and support the implementation of the Community Engagement Framework.

### **Reposition Council as a Community Leader, reflecting community values and vision and delivering community benefit:**

- Acknowledge the complex stakeholder environment
- Consult only when appropriate
- Communicate consistently
- Enable specialist staff to speak for Council
- Plan engagements in an annual or periodic calendar and publish

### **Commit to the stakeholder engagement principles:**

- Be transparent
- Be proactive
- Be available
- Be genuine
- Be consistent

### **Embed a culture of engagement across the organisation:**

- Provide clarity and transparency around Council processes
- Implement custom engagement tools to maximise Eurobodalla Shire Council's approach to engagement
- Break down internal silos through proactive information sharing
- Identify impacted Council departments and provide briefings on engagement activities
- Identify impacted Council advisory panels and provide briefings on engagement activities
- Identify and facilitate the involvement of those potentially affected or interested in a decision
- Prepare engagement plans for each project brief submitted to Council that include engagement levels
- Induct and train Councillors and relevant staff in community engagement to ensure:
  - Familiarity with the framework and engagement principles
  - Communities and stakeholders receive a consistent approach from Council
  - Council departments can identify issues, problems, bottlenecks or challenges early for inclusion/ consideration in the engagement process and plan
- Develop induction program for advisory committee members

### **Demonstrably update approach to communications and engagement:**

- Apply the Framework and Decision Making Tool
- Seek stakeholder feedback on the Engagement Framework
- Position the Engagement Working Group as the leader in engagement and implement appropriate processes to ensure integration of processes with this group
- Identify an opportunity to run a Citizens Panel project using demographic sampling

- Investigate establishing a Citizen Panel for engagement on consultation issues and opportunities as a source of counsel, discussion and insight into Council's community engagement approach
- Establish a community engagement register to monitor and track the numerous engagement activities undertaken across Council to manage consultation fatigue and present a consistent message from Council
- Refine Council's stakeholder mapping and information so stakeholder information is easily accessible and can be shared across Council
- Identify project/stakeholder champions and invite them to participate early in engagement activities
- Review the information and feedback mechanisms for community members and stakeholders to receive the latest information on engagement activities and project updates
- Identify opportunities and activities for elected Council officials in the engagement process.

#### **Refine the approach to communication**

- Promote open lines of communication internal and external
- Share clear, consistent and accurate communications
- Encourage and undertake actions that builds trust with the community – do what we say we will
- Provide stakeholders with the information they need to engage in a meaningful way
- State a clear process prior to commencing project
- Be clear about the levels of influence eg: 'decision-making' compared to 'decision-forming'

#### **Fund the required activities appropriately**

- Not all engagement activities require financial investment, but some do. This is because they may be resource intensive, accommodate a lot of people or require specialist skills.
- Similarly, training for staff in engagement, presentation skills and strategic thinking should be considered
- IAP2 provides industry standard training that will support delivery of the actions and tools described in this report

## Appendices

**Appendix A: Engagement Charter**

**Appendix B: Decision Making Tool**

**Appendix C: IPA2 Spectrum**

**Appendix D: Evaluation Tool**



## Appendix A:

### Eurobodalla Shire Council

### Engagement Charter

# Engagement Charter



Eurobodalla Shire Council is committed to engaging with its community and stakeholders.

Our *One Community: Community Strategic Plan* identifies the importance of **building and maintaining an engaged and connected community** that works together to achieve common goals, where thoughts and ideas are valued, and community members are empowered with knowledge and have the opportunity to participate.

We will engage with the community and our stakeholders, using effective engagement practices, in regard to major issues and plans affecting the region and activities that will have an impact on the community. Our approach to engagement is underpinned by the International Association of Public Participation's (IAP2) Spectrum.

## We believe that good engagement will

- Give us a **better understanding** of community and stakeholder **needs and expectations**
- Help us **identify issues and perspectives** which would not otherwise be known
- Assist in **building positive relationships** with the community and our stakeholders
- Help **increase understanding** of our projects or plans
- Ensure that the community is **informed** about our **responsibilities and actions**
- Enable **community ownership** of outcomes
- **Increase awareness** in regard to the **responsibilities** of Council, the community and stakeholders

## We think engagement is a two way street

### We will:

- Be transparent
- Be proactive
- Be available
- Be genuine
- Be consistent



### We ask you:

- To get involved
- To be prepared to listen to other ideas
- To share your thoughts and feedback
- To ask questions
- To proactively access information

## If you would like to know more

- **Call** 02 4474 1000 or 1800 755 760 (after hours)
- **Email** [council@esc.nsw.gov.au](mailto:council@esc.nsw.gov.au)
- **Visit our website** [www.esc.nsw.gov.au](http://www.esc.nsw.gov.au)
- Send us **mail** via PO Box 99, Moruya NSW 2537
- **Visit us** at the corner Vulcan and Campbell Street, Moruya
- **Read** *Council Noticeboard* in local newspapers
- **Subscribe** to *Online News* from the Council website
- **Like us** on Facebook [www.facebook.com/EurobodallaShireCouncil](http://www.facebook.com/EurobodallaShireCouncil)
- **Follow us** on Twitter [www.twitter.com/inEurobodalla](http://www.twitter.com/inEurobodalla)

## Appendix B:

### Eurobodalla Shire Council

### Decision Making Tool

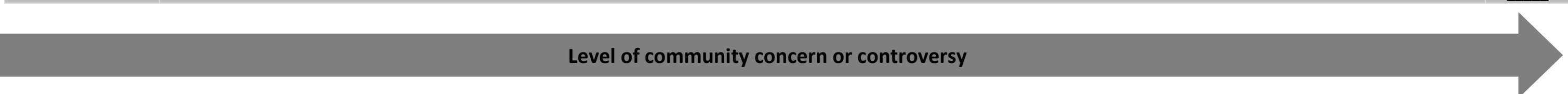
## STEP 1: Determine engagement level

						Ranking
<b>What are we planning to do?</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> local playground or area upgrade <input type="checkbox"/> street furniture installation <input type="checkbox"/> low impact road changes or upgrades <input type="checkbox"/> community building upgrades <input type="checkbox"/> minor amendment to Local Environmental Plan or Development Control Plan <input type="checkbox"/> changes to a local activity or program e.g. time or location <input type="checkbox"/> local events, celebrations or festivals <input type="checkbox"/> licence, lease, activity approval <input type="checkbox"/> assessing development application	<input type="checkbox"/> improvements to shire wide services <input type="checkbox"/> upgrade of regional facilities/parks <input type="checkbox"/> changes to customer services e.g. rates payments, office hours <input type="checkbox"/> rezoning/reclassifying land <input type="checkbox"/> weed control and Landcare programs <input type="checkbox"/> capital works program <input type="checkbox"/> road sealing programs <input type="checkbox"/> community events e.g. NAIDOC celebrations, Youth Week etc.	<input type="checkbox"/> remove, redevelop or relocate a park/playground <input type="checkbox"/> change to or loss of a service e.g. local youth services <input type="checkbox"/> Plan of Management <input type="checkbox"/> New or major amendment to Local Environmental Plan <input type="checkbox"/> Development Control Plan <input type="checkbox"/> town centre studies, urban/rural strategies <input type="checkbox"/> changes to car parking areas <input type="checkbox"/> medium-high impact road closure or upgrades <input type="checkbox"/> Emergency management, e.g. bushfire readiness	<input type="checkbox"/> major change to strategic policy or operations as determined by Council, e.g. service reviews, Delivery Program <input type="checkbox"/> remove a shire wide service e.g. library, recycling, transport <input type="checkbox"/> provision of a regional facility e.g. aquatic/sports centre <input type="checkbox"/> changes or impact to natural bushland or waterway (impacting nature values)	<input type="checkbox"/> Local Government Election <input type="checkbox"/> Community Strategic Plan	(Record ranking)  _____
<b>Ranking (tick):</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> 1	<input type="checkbox"/> 2	<input type="checkbox"/> 3	<input type="checkbox"/> 4	<input type="checkbox"/> 5	

<b>Is there a statutory requirement to engage?</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes, follow the relevant legislation	<input type="checkbox"/> No, record ranking and go to next question
<b>Is there ability or opportunity for community to influence or have input into the decision making?</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes, record raking and go to next question	<input type="checkbox"/> No, go to engagement level = inform
<b>Is this an operational decision?</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes, go to engagement level = inform	<input type="checkbox"/> No, record raking and go to next question

<b>What is the aim of engagement?</b>	To provide the community with balanced and objective information. Can include helping them understand what Council is doing and why by describing the problems, alternatives, opportunities and/or solutions.	To obtain community feedback on a proposal, analysis, alternatives and/or decisions. To consider any submissions from community members.	To work directly with the community throughout the process to ensure that public concerns and aspirations are understood and considered through the project.	To partner with the community in each aspect of the decision making process including the development of alternatives and the identification of the preferred solution.	To place final decision-making and/or delegated budgets in the hands of the public.	(Record ranking)  _____
<b>Ranking (tick):</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> 1	<input type="checkbox"/> 2	<input type="checkbox"/> 3	<input type="checkbox"/> 4	<input type="checkbox"/> 5	
<b>What level of influence will the stakeholders have on the decision?</b>	A decision has already been made. The Community Strategic Plan, technical studies or needs analysis has informed Council's direction. Council will keep stakeholders informed.	Council will consider stakeholder input, alongside other research and studies to inform their decision.	Stakeholder views will be sought at multiple stages in the process to inform decisions progressively throughout the project.	Stakeholders will be key in the decision making process.	Stakeholders make the decision.	(Record ranking)  _____
<b>Ranking (tick):</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> 1	<input type="checkbox"/> 2	<input type="checkbox"/> 3	<input type="checkbox"/> 4	<input type="checkbox"/> 5	
<b>How would you describe the (LIKELY) impact?</b>	<u>Low</u> Minimal impact on a small section of the local government area	<u>Low – Moderate</u> Minimal impact on entire local government area	<u>Moderate</u> Marginal to moderate impact on a section of, or the entire local government area	<u>Moderate – High</u> Moderate to significant impact on a section of, or the entire local government area	<u>High</u> Significant impact on entire local government area	(Record ranking)  _____
<b>Ranking (tick):</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> 1	<input type="checkbox"/> 2	<input type="checkbox"/> 3	<input type="checkbox"/> 4	<input type="checkbox"/> 5	

<b>RANKING TOTAL:</b>	<i>(Add up the score for each row that has a recorded ranking to determine the ranking total)</i>	_____
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After determining the ranking total, consider the following questions. While they may not increase the rating total, they may impact which engagement methods to use and what key messages to share with the community. If there is any uncertainty when answering the following questions, refer to the internal community engagement panel for further discussion.

<p><b>Are there sensitivities associated with the project?</b></p>	<p><input type="checkbox"/> Political  <input type="checkbox"/> Cultural  <input type="checkbox"/> Media</p>
<p><b>Is there a potential impact to community values? (tick all that apply)</b></p>	<p><input type="checkbox"/> Local identity  <input type="checkbox"/> Freedom of association or freedom of speech  <input type="checkbox"/> Land ownership  <input type="checkbox"/> Significant social or economic impact  <input type="checkbox"/> Environment  <input type="checkbox"/> Disability  <input type="checkbox"/> Culture  <input type="checkbox"/> Health  <input type="checkbox"/> Firearms  <input type="checkbox"/> Religion  <input type="checkbox"/> Gender equality  <input type="checkbox"/> Other _____</p>
<p><b>Which stakeholders will we engage? (tick all that apply)</b></p>	<p><input type="checkbox"/> All community members  <input type="checkbox"/> Interest groups  <input type="checkbox"/> Ratepayers (including non-residents)  <input type="checkbox"/> Residents (all or specific target groups)  <input type="checkbox"/> Community groups and organisations, volunteers  <input type="checkbox"/> Visitors  <input type="checkbox"/> Agencies and peak bodies  <input type="checkbox"/> Council staff  <input type="checkbox"/> Councillors  <input type="checkbox"/> Local MPs  <input type="checkbox"/> State and Federal MPs  <input type="checkbox"/> Advisory, sunset, management and steering committees or groups  <input type="checkbox"/> Traffic/emergency management committees  <input type="checkbox"/> Businesses, investors, developers  <input type="checkbox"/> Specific funding providers  <input type="checkbox"/> Media (print, radio, online, social)  <input type="checkbox"/> Education and employment bodies  <input type="checkbox"/> Chambers of commerce and business groups  <input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____</p>
<p><b>Have you considered any barriers that could limit people with disability from participating and taken action to remove those barriers wherever possible?</b></p>	<p><input type="checkbox"/> Yes, go to next step      <input type="checkbox"/> No, identify barriers and remove wherever possible</p>

## STEP 2: Determine engagement method

Ranking total	4 – 6	6 – 8	9 – 15	16 - 17	18 - 20
<b>How will we describe the level of engagement?</b>	<b>Inform</b> We will keep stakeholders informed.	<b>Consult</b> We will inform stakeholders, listen to and acknowledge their views and provide feedback on how stakeholder input has influenced the decision.	<b>Involve</b> We will work with stakeholders to ensure that stakeholder views and aspirations are directly reflected in the alternatives developed and provide feedback on how stakeholder input has influenced the decision.	<b>Collaborate</b> We will look to stakeholders for direct advice and innovation in formulating solutions and incorporate that advice and recommendations into the decisions to the maximum extent possible.	<b>Empower</b> We will implement what stakeholders decide.
<b>What will the engagement consist of?</b>	Council will deliver information to stakeholders. Communication is one-way. Often the community is informed about a decision that has been made and relevant action or activities scheduled to take place.	Council obtains feedback from the community regarding views, solutions, alternatives and proposals to inform and influence the outcome of Council decisions and actions.	Council will design a participatory process to identify community concerns, aspirations and issues and ensure they are considered prior to decision making.	Council works together with the community to identify preferred solutions and alternatives, once issues and interests are well understood.	Refers to community development and community capacity building initiatives whereby Council provides opportunities and resources for communities to contribute their skills and talents.
<b>What tools and information will we use?</b>  <i>This list should be used as a guide only. Not all activities will be appropriate for all projects, and some activities from other columns may be appropriate.</i>	<input type="checkbox"/> Website <input type="checkbox"/> Media release, radio, social media, email newsletter <input type="checkbox"/> Newspaper, radio paid ad <input type="checkbox"/> Letter to directly affected stakeholders <input type="checkbox"/> Community information session, stall, or event <input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____	<input type="checkbox"/> Website <input type="checkbox"/> Media release, radio, social media, email newsletter <input type="checkbox"/> Newspaper noticeboard <input type="checkbox"/> Newspaper, radio paid ad <input type="checkbox"/> Letterbox drop to directly affected stakeholders <input type="checkbox"/> Letter or email notification or invitation to local stakeholder groups <input type="checkbox"/> Stakeholder briefings Community information session, stall, or event <input type="checkbox"/> Feedback form or survey <input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____	<input type="checkbox"/> Website <input type="checkbox"/> Media release, radio, social media, email newsletter <input type="checkbox"/> Letterbox drop to directly affected stakeholders <input type="checkbox"/> Letter or email notification or invitation to local stakeholder groups <input type="checkbox"/> Newspaper, radio paid ad <input type="checkbox"/> Stakeholder briefings <input type="checkbox"/> Community information session, stall, or event <input type="checkbox"/> Feedback form, survey or interviews <input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____	<input type="checkbox"/> Website <input type="checkbox"/> Media release, radio, social media, email newsletter <input type="checkbox"/> Letterbox drop to directly affected stakeholders <input type="checkbox"/> Letter or email notification or invitation to local stakeholder groups <input type="checkbox"/> Newspaper, radio paid ad <input type="checkbox"/> Stakeholder briefings <input type="checkbox"/> Deliberative process or Citizens Jury <input type="checkbox"/> Workshop or forum <input type="checkbox"/> Feedback form, survey or interviews <input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____	<input type="checkbox"/> Website <input type="checkbox"/> Media release, radio, social media, email newsletter <input type="checkbox"/> Letterbox drop to directly affected stakeholders <input type="checkbox"/> Letter or email notification or invitation to local stakeholder groups <input type="checkbox"/> Newspaper, radio paid ad <input type="checkbox"/> Deliberative process or Citizens Jury <input type="checkbox"/> Election / voting process <input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____

Engagement budget and resources



### STEP 3: Implementing the engagement program

PHASE	ACTIVITIES				MESSAGING FRAMEWORK
Prepare	Establish Project Team	Workshop with project team around approach, issues, stakeholders and messaging.	Write down your plan	Allocate resources	<p><b>Tell them what you are going to do.</b></p> <p><i>Example: Council will be asking for your feedback on improvements to our parks. Your feedback will help Council develop a Park Improvement Plan. The plan will tell Council and the community how and when our parks will be maintained and improved.</i></p>
	Draft key messages	Align engagement activities with appropriate project phases	Prepare communications	Schedule all engagements and communication	
Engage	Deliver engagement activities	Engage with and disseminate information to stakeholder groups	Analyse feedback	Refine approach as needed	<p><b>Tell them what you are doing.</b></p> <p><i>Example: Have your say about improvements to parks in your area by completing our survey.</i></p>
Close the loop	Document the engagement and the outcomes	Report back to stakeholders about how their input informed the outcome	Thank stakeholders for their involvement	Evaluate the project and engagement program	<p><b>Tell them what you have done and how you used any feedback.</b></p> <p><i>Example: Council conducted a survey about where improvements should be made. The feedback we received has informed the development of a Park Improvement Plan. The plan tells Council and the community how and when our parks will be maintained and improved.</i></p>

Ongoing liaison with Project Team and reference to Engagement Plan to guide decision making

Appendix C:

Eurobodalla Shire Council

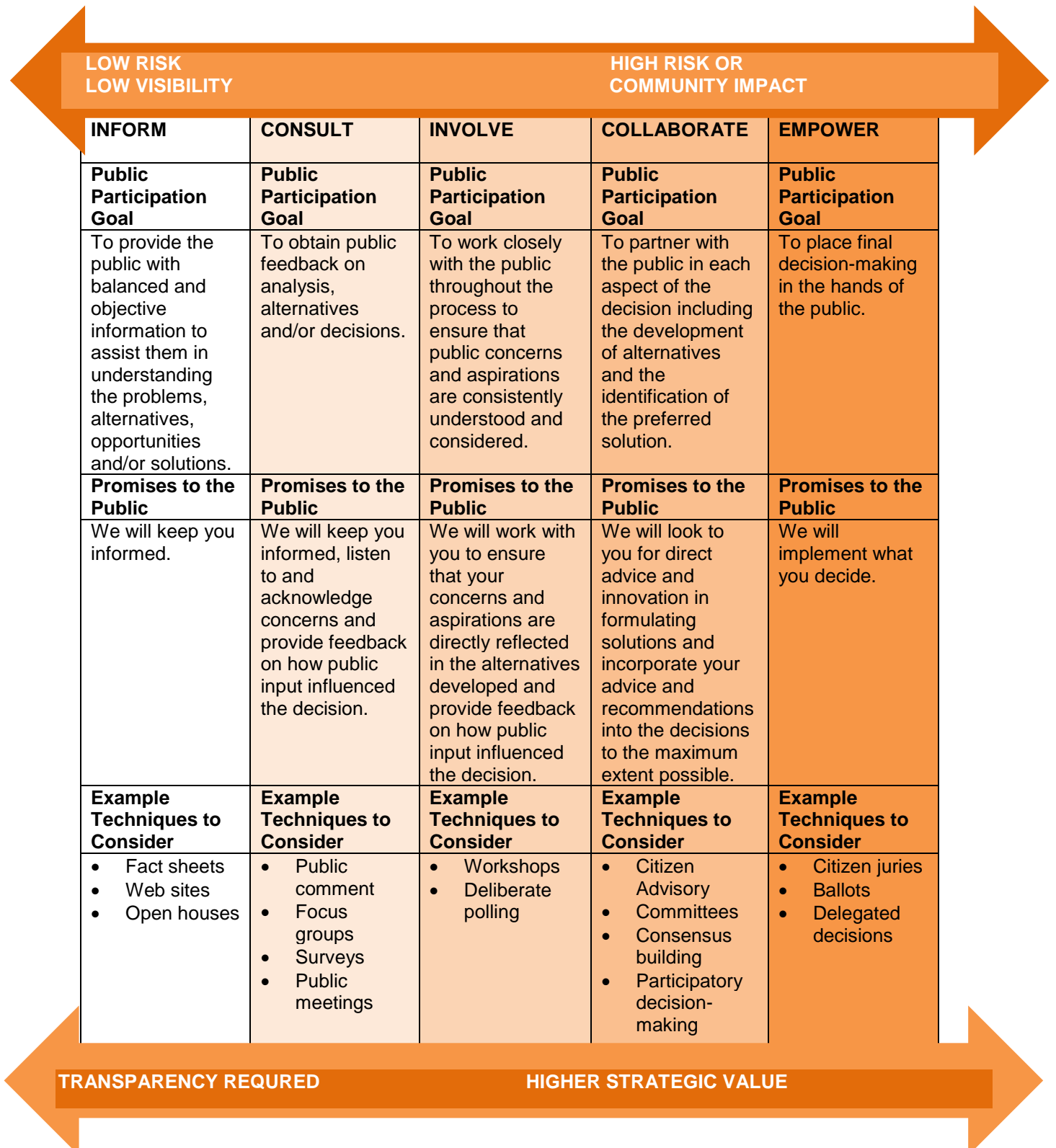
IAP2 Spectrum





## IAP2 Public Participation Spectrum including a risk analysis model

The spectrum has been developed by the International Association for Public Participation. Practical application of the model in an infrastructure or policy project requires a risk analysis to guide the required/preferred level of engagement. This model reflects the practice of KJA. It operates in conjunction with the risk allocation model overleaf.



Appendix D:

Eurobodalla Shire Council

Evaluation Tool



# Community Engagement Evaluation Tool

Project Name:	Date:
Project Description:	<i>On a scale of 1 to 5, rate how you think ESC performed. 1 is poorly, 5 is excellent.</i>
Project goals/ objectives:	
1. How well do you think the project <b>involved the community</b> in the process?	1.○ 2.○ 3.○ 4.○ 5.○
2. How well do you think the project was able to <b>incorporate the community's contribution</b> in the final decision?	1.○ 2.○ 3.○ 4.○ 5.○
3. How well do you think the project was able to <b>recognise and communicate the needs and interests</b> of all participants?	1.○ 2.○ 3.○ 4.○ 5.○
4. How well do you think the project <b>sought out and facilitated the participation</b> of those affected by or interested in the project	1.○ 2.○ 3.○ 4.○ 5.○
5. How well did the project <b>seek participation from the community</b> in a meaningful way?	1.○ 2.○ 3.○ 4.○ 5.○
6. How well did the project <b>provide feedback to participants</b> on how their input affected the decision?	1.○ 2.○ 3.○ 4.○ 5.○
What was the <b>most successful aspect</b> of the project?	
What part of the process would you like to see <b>improved??</b>	



**Sydney Office**

Level 9, 2 Elizabeth Plaza, North Sydney NSW 2060  
PO Box 302, North Sydney NSW 2059  
T 02 9955 5040 F 02 9955 5901

**Melbourne Office**

Level 10, 71 Queens Road, Melbourne, VIC, 3004  
PO Box 7692, Melbourne VIC 3004  
T 03 9514 1600

E [info@kjassoc.com.au](mailto:info@kjassoc.com.au) [www.kjassoc.com.au](http://www.kjassoc.com.au)