

One Community – Our Story

Community Strategic Plan Review – Engagement Strategy
June 2016

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Introduction

The NSW Governments Integrated Planning and Reporting Framework requires Council to review and adopt key Integrated Plans following local government elections. The review process is facilitated by Council staff and involves the new Council, key stakeholders as well as the broader Eurobodalla community.

Local government elections will be held in September 2016 and this Community Engagement Strategy outlines the process for involving the Eurobodalla community in the development and review of Council's Community Strategic Plan.

The purpose of the Community Engagement Strategy is identify stakeholders and plan engagement ensuring all stakeholders are able to access and participate in the development, implementation and review of our Community Strategic Plan.

Objectives

The objectives of the Community Engagement Strategy are to:

- Involve our community, including 'hard to reach' groups, in the review of the Community Strategic Plan.
- Provide opportunities for collaboration within our community in reviewing the Community Strategic Plan.
- Ensure engagement methods and techniques are tailored to the needs of our community and delivered in a timely manner.
- Provide process and outcomes that will inform the development of a comprehensive and relevant Community Strategic Plan.

Key messages and communications

- What is Integrated Planning and Reporting and what does it mean for our community and key stakeholders.
- How our community can get involved in the development and review of the Community Strategic Plan.
- Is Council providing the right level of service to deliver on community vision?
- What is the timeframe and who is responsible for what.

Stakeholders

Our stakeholders in this process are both internal and external and include but are not limited to the following key groups:

- **Community** - Anyone who lives in, works or visits Eurobodalla
- **Ratepayers** - Anyone who owns property in the Eurobodalla local government area including resident and non-resident ratepayers
- **Business** – Including business owners, operators and employees, and industry, Chambers of Commerce and business associations.
- **Community groups** – includes non-profit civic, cultural and religious organisations such as volunteers, progress associations, resident action groups, sporting and recreation groups and clubs
- **Local schools, education and training institutes** – including TAFE, universities, vocational training providers, schools and lifelong learning organisations.
- **Mayor and Councillors**
- **Council Staff**
- **Volunteers** – including community services, sustainability and Landcare
- **Advisory committees** – any advisory committee of Council such as Tourism, Business, Disability, Aboriginal and Police Liaison.
- **Neighbouring Councils and Regional bodies** – including Bega Valley and Shoalhaven City Councils and the Canberra Region Joint Organisation
- **Government agencies** – NSW and Australian government agencies with which Council partners or advocates to on behalf of the community.

Key considerations

Legislative context

Council must prepare and implement a Community Engagement Strategy for engagement with the local community in developing and reviewing the Community Strategic Plan. The Integrated Planning and Reporting Manual states that as a minimum, the Community Engagement Strategy must identify relevant stakeholder groups within the community and outline methods of engaging each group. Due consideration must also be given to the expected levels of service expressed by the community when preparing the Community Strategic Plan.

The Local Government Act 1993 states that the Community Strategic Plan must be based on social justice principles:

- **Equity** – There is fairness in decision making and prioritising and allocation of resources.
- **Access** – All people have fair access to services, resources and opportunities to meet their basic needs and improve their quality of life.
- **Participation** – Everyone has the maximum opportunity to genuinely participate in decisions which affect their lives.
- **Rights** – Everyone’s rights are recognised and promoted.

Reach

It is important that Council achieves a comprehensive reach with its engagement program. This includes connecting with key minority or community groups and hard to reach groups and individuals. This can be achieved through the use of a range of methods to maximise involvement, ensuring a balance between the towns, villages and rural areas and maximising connections and community awareness. Consideration will also be given to the diversity of our community and those whose voice may not normally be heard in community discussions including:

- people with a disability
- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities
- people from culturally or linguistically diverse backgrounds (CALD)
- children and young people
- people in geographically isolated areas
- single parents
- the elderly

Previous engagement outcomes

Over the past four years, Council has engaged the community on a range of issues and has received a significant amount of valued community feedback and input. It is important that an appropriate level of acknowledgement and respect is paid to these existing engagement exercises and outcomes. They will form the basis for the review of the Community Strategic Plan and inform this engagement cycle. It is also important that Council is conscious of the possibility of consultation fatigue within the community and puts in place processes that allow a broad range of people to be involved in the engagement process.

Engagement phases

It is proposed to take a three phased approach to engagement as outlined below, allowing for input from the community at all stages of the process.

<p>Phase 1: Information exchange Engagement level: inform/consult Objective: To provide balanced objective information to assist in understanding problems alternatives and opportunities.</p>
<p>Phase 2: Issue exploration and solution development Engagement level: involve/collaborate Objective: To explore community expectations and Council's ability and capacity to deliver on shared vision and goals and develop an agreed way forward.</p>
<p>Phase 3: Confirmation and completion Engagement level: inform/consult Objective: To confirm that the end result reflects the intention of those involved in engagement and sentiments expressed by the broader community.</p>

Methods

Key methods proposed to be used across all three phases of engagement include:

- **Social media campaign:** This campaign will involve the use of social media platforms to seek a broad community response on visioning and service delivery topics to complement more targeted engagement approaches.
- **Public exhibition:** Public exhibition involves providing a copy of documents or information to the broader community for comment. It is normally for a period of 28-42 days and legislatively required. Extensive supporting media is carried out to ensure awareness of the public exhibition period and ways to be involved in the process.
- **Deliberative forum:** The deliberative forum will provide the opportunity for a smaller working group to work through the issues and opportunities raised throughout engagement and determine an appropriate way forward.

Phase 1. Information exchange

Engagement level: inform/consult

Objective: To provide balanced objective information to assist in understanding problems, drivers, alternatives and opportunities.

The first phase is about gathering and sharing information and ideas. It involves a review of the current state of play including: current challenges/issues and key drivers, previous engagement exercises and outcomes, and progress towards achieving our community goals. Information to inform development of engagement material will be sourced from community satisfaction and visioning surveys, Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) data, Council annual reports and other relevant data sources. This information will be presented to the broader community for feedback on the current situation, progress, and any potential responses or future direction.

Key messages: *“Where are we now? What have we done to get here? Where to from here?”*

Deliverables:

- Our Story: State of the Shire - report and summary
- End of Term Report

Activity	Purpose	Engagement Level	Timing
Our Story: State of Shire <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Public exhibition	To combine community perception, as obtained through the community surveys and engagement, with facts from relevant data sources to allow assessment of key issues and drivers within Eurobodalla. The public exhibition will seek broad community feedback on the document to inform future planning.	Inform	August 2016
Social media campaign- #myeurobodalla <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Broad web and social media based awareness and visioning campaign	To build awareness of IP&R review and obtain broad community and stakeholder feedback on visioning for Eurobodalla’s future. This data will accompany statistical data and past community engagement outcomes to inform review.	Consult	August 2016
End of Term Report	To outline progress implementing current integrated plans over the current council term and fulfil legislative requirements	Inform	August 2016

Phase 2. Issue exploration and solution development

Engagement level: involve/collaborate

Objective: To explore community expectations and Council's ability and capacity to deliver on shared vision and goals and develop an agreed way forward.

The second phase is about partnering with our community and stakeholders, both internal and external, to work through issues, opportunities and alternatives raised during engagement to develop potential solutions. Smaller more focused, representative group engagement exercises will encourage richer dialogue and consensus on issues, directions and outcomes.

Key messages: *"what is our community vision for the next ten years"*

Deliverables:

- Draft Community Strategic Plan

Activity	Purpose	Engagement Level	Timing
Deliberative forums <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Internal and external	To confirm vision, focus areas, objectives and strategies based on community feedback.	Involve	June - September

Phase 3. Confirmation and completion

Engagement level: inform/consult

Objective: Confirm that the end result reflects the intention of those involved in engagement and the sentiments expressed by the broader community.

The third phase takes the draft Community Strategic Plan back to the community to confirm that nothing was lost in translation and that the end documents convey what community members intended. All stakeholders will be provided with the opportunity to comment on the draft documents and be provided with feedback on how their comments influence the final outcome.

Key messages: *“Did we get it right” “Does the end result reflect your input”*

Deliverables:

- Final Community Strategic Plan

Activity	Purpose	Engagement Level	Timing
Community Strategic Plan <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Public exhibition	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Meet legislative requirement and ensure final documents reflect community engagement and input.	Inform/Consult	May - June 2017

Evaluation and review

During each phase of the process, evaluation and review will be undertaken to ensure:

- Engagement methods and techniques have reached all relevant stakeholders
- Data and information gathered through engagement activities is of high quality and integrity
- The views, vision and priorities of the community are heard and accurately recorded
- Council’s legislative requirements are met