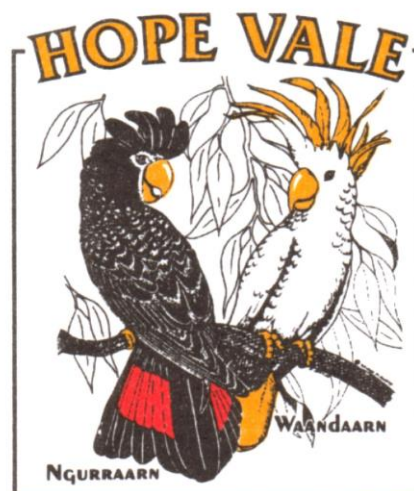


**HOPE VALE ABORIGINAL SHIRE COUNCIL**



**Community Engagement Policy**

**Document Control**

**Document Details:**

**Document Reference Number:** 0005/015  
**Version Number:** 5  
**Business Unit:** Corporate  
**Scheduled Review Date:** Ongoing

**Version History**

<b>Version Number</b>	<b>Date</b>	<b>Signature</b>	<b>Reason / Comments</b>
1	20 July 2011		Council Resolution
2	20 March 2013		Council Resolution
3	21 February 2018		Council Resolution
4	27 February 2019		Council Resolution
5	17 March 2021		Council Resolution

## COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT POLICY 2020-2021

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### ORIGIN/AUTHORITY

*Local Government Act 2009*

*Local Government (Finance, Plans and Reporting) Regulation 2010*

### PURPOSE

Genuine and effective community engagement has benefits for Council and citizens. Engagement allows Council to tap wider sources of information, perspectives and potential solutions. This in turn results in assistance and guidance in terms of decision-making and consequently better outcomes for the community.

Community engagement does not replace the decision-making functions of Council. Rather these processes are designed to ensure that Council has access to a broad range of information about community needs, opinions and options prior to decisions being made. It also increases the likelihood that Council decisions are understood and supported by the community.

The Hope Vale Aboriginal Shire Council understands community engagement to contain the following basic elements:

- **Information:** To provide key stakeholders and members of the community with objective and balanced information on policies, plans and strategies.
- **Consultation:** To obtain feedback from the community and key stakeholders to enable a broader understanding by Councillors and Council staff of the local needs concerns and priorities prior to decision-making.
- **Participation:** To enhance community ownership of decisions and resultant outcomes and commitment to the decisions made, through involvement in discussions of issues and options.

### AIM

Section 130 of the Local Government (Finance, Plans and Reporting) Regulation 2010 requires a local government prepare and adopt a policy describing how the local government engages with the community about –

- (a) Preparing, reviewing and changing its long-term community plan; and
- (b) Any other matters mentioned in the policy relevant to establishing or reviewing the performance of its systems of financial management.

Hope Vale Aboriginal Shire Council is committed to strengthening and coordinating its community engagement activities, in order to improve its decision making processes for corporate planning, services and major projects. The intention of this policy is to broadly define Councils approach to the engagement of our community.

## **POLICY STATEMENT**

Hope Vale Aboriginal Shire Council is committed to undertaking robust and comprehensive engagement with its community to facilitate a dialogue between the Council and its community on key decisions and projects and in particular the strategic planning and community planning processes.

Council will also work with the community to identify the most appropriate and effective engagement methods in order to continually improve the relationships between all parties and ensure that the strategic plan and community plan reflect the majority community views.

## **OBJECTIVES**

1. To provide a framework that encourages a relationship with the whole operation of Council. It should be read in conjunction with the Community Engagement Guidelines.
2. To encourage community engagement practices that draw on the skills and wisdom of citizens in order to add value to decision-making processes. It should be emphasised however that the ultimate responsibility for decision-making rests with Council.
3. To ensure the community engagement is clearly linked to the goals and objectives of the Corporate Plan.
4. To ensure that Council activities within the community are inclusive of all members of the community.
5. To foster collaboration and cooperation between Council and the community, including other spheres of government in the planning and implementation of programs and services for the Hope Vale area.
6. To increase community understanding of Council through improved relationships and communication.

## **DEFINITION**

For the purposes of this policy, community engagement can be defined as “any planned process that involves the public in decision-making and uses public input to make better decisions”.

## **POLICY PRINCIPLES**

1. That Council will provide genuine opportunities for informed community engagement in decision-making in a framework of local democracy.
2. That community engagement forms an integral part of the development, implementation and evaluation of policies, programs and services.
3. That Council will adopt open, accountable processes through which individuals and groups can exchange views and influence policy or decision-making.
4. That there is transparency and accountability in the process which is open, two-way and ongoing.
5. That opportunity will be provided to community members around discussions about council initiatives which are likely to impact upon them.

6. That the day to day operations and administration of the Council shall reflect the philosophical objectives of this policy.

This policy confirms the commitment of Hope Vale Aboriginal Shire Council to ensuring that community engagement forms an integral component of informed decision-making and as such aims to ensure that as many people as possible who are affected by decisions of Council have the opportunity to be consulted about their needs and concerns prior to decisions being made.

The Community Engagement Policy addresses the principles outlined in 4 Council's Corporate Plan 2018 – 2023

This policy has been prepared after consideration of the following (as amended) pieces of legislation and plans:

- Local Government Act 2009
- Queensland Sustainable Planning Act 2009
- Local Government (Finance, Plans and Reporting) Regulation 2009
- Queensland Integrated Planning Act 1997

#### **REVIEW AND MONITORING**

Council will formally review this community engagement policy after 2 years of operation.

In order to ensure that the actions detailed within this policy are undertaken and information is co-ordinated Council will charge the Executive Management Team with monitoring and reporting on the implementation of this policy.

**Adopted by Council on the 17 March 2021**

Shannon Gibbs  
Director of Finance

**APPENDIX A**

**COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT SURVEY FORM**