



Community Engagement Strategy 2021-2022



Version: 1 – Date: February 2022

This document has been specifically drafted for use by the Break O'Day Council and the Break O'Day Community, August 2021.

Disclaimer:

Every reasonable effort has been made to ensure that this document is correct at the time of issue. Break O'Day Council disclaims all liability in respect of the consequences of anything done or omitted.

Legislative Requirements:

The Tasmanian Government is currently formulating a new Local Government Act and whilst the prescription within the legislation is still unknown, the proposed Reform Directions have been communicated.

#17 – All Councils will develop and adopt a community engagement strategy

Councils will develop a Community Engagement Strategy after each election, in collaboration with their communities. The Community Engagement Strategy will inform how councils will engage, involve, consult and inform their communities on plans, projects and policies. Councils will be required to follow their Community Engagement Strategy when engaging communities on their Strategic Plan in determining their service delivery priorities and when setting their budget (including rating decisions).

#18 – Removing prescriptive consultation requirements

Councils will have broadened capacity to engage with their communities in accordance with their Community Engagement Strategy. Wherever possible, prescriptive requirements to provide reports and information in a specified way, such as by post, will be removed. Some specific consultation requirements will be maintained where necessary to protect the rights of the community and councils.

(Review of the Local Government Legislative Framework – Approved Reforms, 9 June 2020, pg4).

Contents

What is Community Engagement?	4
Community Engagement Framework	4
Aims of the Strategy.....	5
Guiding Principles	6
Who will we engage with?.....	6
Level of Participation	8
How will we engage with you?	10
What methods will we use and when?.....	10
Roles and Responsibility	10
When we engage?.....	11
When can't we engage?.....	11
How will we report back to our community?	11
How will we ensure meaningful engagement?.....	12
Review and Reporting.....	13
References and Resources.....	13

What is Community Engagement?

Community Engagement in Local Government is a planned, two-way process. It ensures individuals, stakeholders and community groups are informed of Council activities and have the opportunity to participate in the decision-making processes of Council on issues that affect them. Community engagement enriches project outcomes and ensures that Council decisions reflect the views of community.

Why do we have a Community Engagement Strategy?

To increase the participation of our community in the activities and decisions of Council. To ensure our community feel included in the decision-making process and that Council decisions reflect the views and sentiment of the community.

Community Engagement Framework

The Framework consists of this Strategy and an Implementation Guide for our staff. Our Framework is based on the [International Association for Public Participation \(IAP2\)](#).

Our Community Engagement Strategy is a living document that outlines a consistent approach for how we engage across all areas of Council with our community.

Aims of the Strategy

We aim to better inform and involve the community on matters, considerations, innovations and projects that impact them. To make sure members of our community are heard and their views considered as part of Council's decision-making process.

We are committed to continuous improvement and will strive for best practice approaches at all times. Our Community Engagement Strategy will be an evolving document taking into consideration new communication technology, lessons learned, and our changing community demographics and needs.

Aim 1. Inclusion and Accessibility

We will use a variety of communication methods and endeavor to provide everyone the opportunity to participate.

Aim 2. Transparency and Accountability

Provide fairness, transparency and accountability for council decision-making processes that help create a thriving community where everyone feels safe, welcome and connected.

Aim 3. Integrity and Respect

Everyone understands the role and value of community engagement, and Council's engagement processes are consistent and understood.

Aim 4. Open and Honest Communication

A clear and consistent approach to community engagement ensures people can participate in issues and projects relevant to them and can contribute to the decision-making process where appropriate.

Aim 5. Best Practice

Council recognise and implement the most appropriate engagement method according to the matter or project and community context.

Staff have access to tools and resources to perform best practice community engagement, to provide a consistent approach to report back to community.

Guiding Principles

Be Clear – We will be clear about WHAT, WHO and HOW we engage, and how this will affect our decision-making.

Be Educated – We will seek to understand the different perspectives in our community; and do our best to help our community understand the topics and projects of interest to them.

Be Timely – We will strive to give the community as much chance as possible to participate.

Be Inclusive – We will use different methods to ensure our engagement is accessible to everyone. We will do our best to provide our community with all the information they need to be part of meaningful consultation.

Be Meaningful – We will strive to identify and engage with people, groups and organisations in our community who have a specific interest, or will be affected by a decision and provide participation opportunities that people value.

Be Transparent and Accountable – We will be honest with our community about the scope and constraints of participation opportunities. We will make engagement data available to the public where possible, and explain how this information influenced decision-making.

Who will we engage with?

Some of the things we will ask ourselves when determining who we will engage with include:

- **Who will be directly affected/impacted by this (topic)?**
- **Who has involvement in the (topic)?**
- **Who can influence the outcome of this project/issue?**

How will we engage with you?

Council will adopt an inclusive and accessible approach to our community engagement. We will consider the community needs and capacity, and the type of matter or project when we make choices about the most appropriate form of engagement.

We recognise the increasing capacity and accessibility of technology as a communication tool but we understand that there are many ways to engage with our community and not everyone has access to, or uses, technology. We will preference digital technologies to communicate with our community where appropriate. We will always complement digital methods with non-digital methods to ensure participation is accessible and preference non-digital methods where and when appropriate.

How you can engage with us

Council welcomes community input, feedback and insight and there are number of ways you can engage with us.

Aside from making sure you have your say when we open up community engagement, there are a range of ways you can share your thoughts with us.

Customer Service Request Form

Access the Customer Service Request Form on our website under My Council/Customer Feedback. You can also call the office on 6376 7900 or email admin@bodc.tas.gov.au who can help you with your request.

Write to Us

You can write a letter to the General Manager. That way we can hear your feedback in your own words. This can be emailed to admin@bodc.tas.gov.au , dropped in to the mailbox outside our office or mailed in.

Visit Us in Person

Drop in to the office between 9am 5pm Monday to Friday (excluding public holidays) and speak to our friendly staff.

Speak to a Councillor

Councillors are elected to represent the views of the community. Part of their role includes listening to and raising the concerns of the community with Council.

Council Meetings

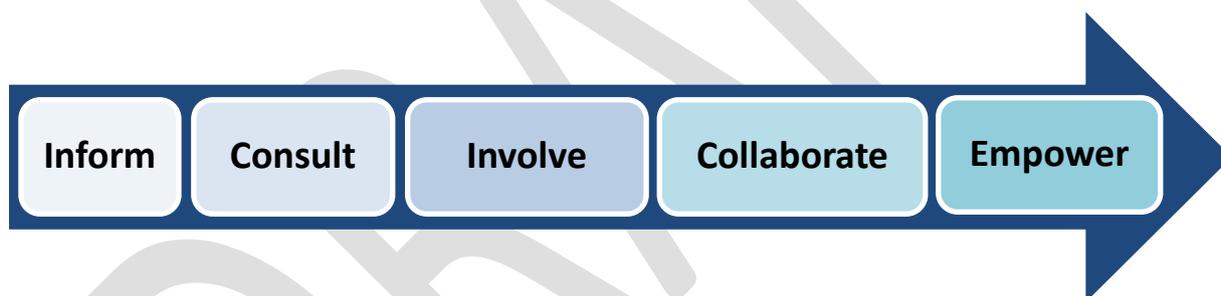
Everyone is welcome to attend and ask questions at Council meetings. You can find meeting times and information on our website.

Petitions

You can put together a valid petition to present at a Council meeting. There is information on our website on how to ensure your petition is valid and can be considered by Council.

More information on having your Feedback heard can be found on our website under My Council/Customer Feedback.

Level of Participation



The IAP2 Spectrum for Public Participation is an internationally recognised tool used in the Local Government Sector. The spectrum identifies five levels of increasing participation.

The level of community participation in decision-making will depend on the issue / project. For example, Community Engagement may comprise of INFORMING the community of activities and decisions of Council. At other times, when Council is seeking community input, we may CONSULT or INVOLVE. When the community can take the lead on a topic, we will use methods that foster COLLABORATION or EMPOWERMENT.

Increasing Participation in Decision-Making – (IAP2)

	Inform	Consult	Involve	Collaborate	Empower
INTENT	Keep people informed about the things that matter to them.	Listen, consult and engage with our community and individuals.	Work with people to ensure their concerns and aspirations inform decision-making.	Build and maintain strong relationships to achieve better outcomes.	Support and facilitate a thriving community.
PROMISE	Share information to community through effective methods tailored to the situation.	Invite input. Consider and represent our community. Provide feedback.	Support and enable people to directly share their concerns and aspirations. Provide feedback.	Foster partnerships with community to share processes and responsibilities.	Foster and support community leadership and responsibility for our shared future.

What methods will we use and when?

Each project or issue is unique and we recognize that the needs and aspirations of our community change over time. We will use the IAP2 Spectrum to guide our level of engagement and use the most suitable methods, tools and approaches to meet the level of engagement to our best capability.

IAP2 Level	Suitable methods
Inform	Web page, social media, newsletter, media (TV, radio, newspaper), direct email and community noticeboard.
Consult	Online and hard-copy survey including the availability to do them over the counter at reception, community meetings or drop-in sessions
Involve	Community workshops and/or online forums.
Collaborate	Establishment of Working Group/Advisory Committee, online forum supported by Council.
Empower	Community lead action group/committee communicating with Council.

Roles and Responsibility

Community engagement is the responsibility of all Council service areas, teams and employees.

Council is elected to make decisions on behalf of the community for the benefit of the whole community.

The Council seeks to take account of the views, needs, issues and aspirations expressed by the community through the engagement process and to balance these with other influences such as budgetary and legislative constraints to make informed decisions.

When can we engage?

- ✓ On projects or issues of significant community interest for example the Annual Plan, Financial Budgets and Annual Report
- ✓ When a Council decision could have significant impact on the community or a stakeholder group
- ✓ When there is an opportunity to involve the community in decisions relating to the nature, scope, design or delivery of a project or initiative
- ✓ When an outcome involves a change in services or infrastructure provided by Council
- ✓ When Council has a statutory, legislative or regulatory requirement

When can't we engage?

- ✗ When an immediate response is required, such as in an emergency situation
- ✗ When a decision must be made because of legal or safety requirements
- ✗ When the activity is considered "business as usual" and there is no new information to consider
- ✗ When community input would not influence a decision
- ✗ When timeframes and direction from other levels of government do not allow for meaningful engagement

How will we report back to our community?

Part of our commitment to our community is that we will report back with the results of our engagement and how this information influenced a decision.

We will compile results from our consultation into a report that will be made available on our website. We will promote reports through different digital and non-digital methods. Reporting back does not apply to the INFORM level of the IAP2 spectrum.

How will we ensure meaningful engagement?

Feedback and evaluation of our engagement process is essential to ensure that our Community Engagement is meaningful. We will adopt a formal internal process to ensure we review our engagement practices. We will consider, among other things:

- Was our process inclusive and accessible?
- Did we talk to the right people?
- Did we ask the right questions?
- Was the timing right?
- Was the information easy to understand?
- What worked well and what didn't?
- Did we have the right resources?
- What feedback did we receive from the community about the consultation?
- What learnings are there for next time?

A copy of our Community Engagement procedures and policies can be found on our website if you would like more detail.

Review and Reporting

The Communications Coordinator will oversee the management of the Community Engagement Framework.

Each department manager of Council is responsible for developing their own Engagement Plans based on this framework.

Engagement Plans are developed with the Communication Coordinator to ensure alignment with this framework.

The Community Engagement Strategy will be a living document and we will strive for best practice by reviewing each community engagement process so learnings and improvements can be included in the strategy.

We will review the Strategy and Process in entirety each Local Government election year.

We will include in our Annual Report a summary of our Engagement Activities.

References and Resources

Available on our website, www.bodc.tas.gov.au

Break O'Day Council's 10 year Strategic Plan 2017 – 2027

- Break O'Day Council's Community Engagement Policy
- Break O'Day Council's Community Implementation Guide
- Break O'Day Council's Communication Strategy

Definitions

COMMUNICATION

The provision of one-way information to advise the community and stakeholders about a project, initiative or issue. It can also involve two-way dialogue with community and stakeholders to achieve a particular outcome.

COMMUNITY

All residents, ratepayers, landowners and members of the public including individuals, groups, visitors, organisations, government and business.

STAKEHOLDER

A person, group or organisation who may be affected by, have a specific interest in, or influence over, a council decision or issue under consideration.

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

How Council will communicate with the community. Council's Community Engagement will be guided by the IAP2 five levels of participation, inform, involve, consult, collaborate and empower.

STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT

The process by which an organisation involves people who may be affected by the decisions it makes, or can influence the implementation of its decisions.

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

The involvement of those affected by a decision in the decision-making process.