



# Community Engagement Strategy 2021-2022



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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, involves, 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).

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## What is Community Engagement?

Community Engagement in Local Government is defined as a planned, two-way process of communication. It makes sure you, the community, stakeholders and community groups are informed of Council activities and have the chance to provide feedback in the decision-making of Council on issues that affect you. Community engagement also makes sure that Council decisions reflect the views of community.

## Why do we have a Community Engagement Strategy?

To increase the involvement of our community in the activities and decisions of Council.

To make sure our community feel included in decision-making and make sure Council decisions reflect the views and feelings of the community.

## What is the Community Engagement Framework?

The Framework will include this Strategy and a procedure for our staff to use to make sure they are engaging with the community as agreed to. Collectively we will refer to these documents as the Community Engagement Framework.

Our Community Engagement Strategy is meant to be a high level document designed to provide aims and guidelines for delivering community Engagement. Detail for each engagement project will be recorded in our procedures.

The Community Engagement Framework is a living document, meaning it can be flexible and adapted when needed.

## **Aims of the Strategy**

### **Aim 1. Inclusion and Accessibility**

We will use a range of communication methods to try and reach as many people as possible and will try to provide everyone the opportunity to participate.

### **Aim 2. Transparency and Accountability**

We will be fair, transparent and accountable in our decision-making and do all we can to create a thriving community where everyone feels safe, welcome and connected.

### **Aim 3. Integrity and Respect**

We will do all we can to make sure everyone understands the role and value of community engagement, and that our engagement is consistent and understood.

### **Aim 4. Open and Honest Communication**

We will be clear and consistent in our approach to community engagement to ensure people can participate in decision-making where appropriate.

### **Aim 5. Best Practice**

We will recognise and apply the most appropriate engagement methods according to the audience, matter or project.

We will make sure staff have access to tools and resources to perform best practice community engagement.

## 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 viewpoints 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 contribute to decision-making.

**Be Inclusive** – We will use different ways of communication to make sure our engagement is accessible to everyone. We will do our best to provide our community with all the information needed to make sure consultation is informed and meaningful.

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

**Be Transparent and Accountable** – We will be honest with our community about the scope and limitations of participation opportunities. We will make engagement data available to the public 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 make choices about the most appropriate forms of engagement.

We recognise the increasing popularity of technology as a communication tool but we also understand there are many ways to engage and not everyone has access to, or uses, technology. We will preference digital technologies to communicate with our community where appropriate and preference non-digital methods where and when appropriate. We will always use both digital and non-digital methods to make sure participation is accessible to as many people as possible.

## How you can engage with us

Council welcomes community input and feedback 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](mailto: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](mailto: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.

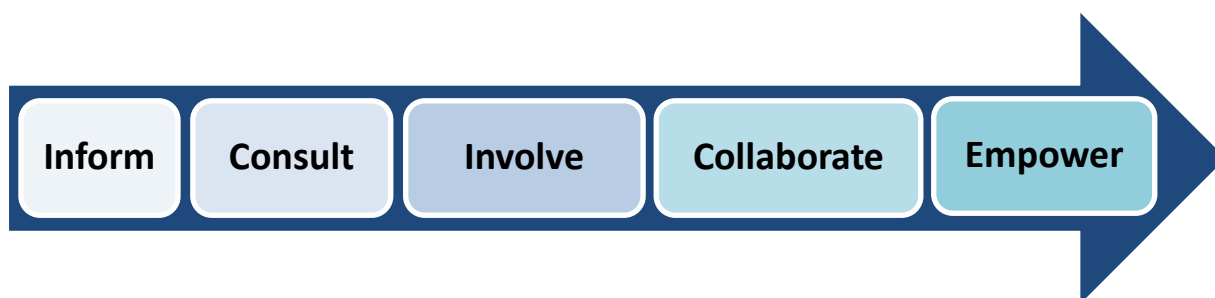
## Petitions

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

IAP2 Spectrum is pictured below.



The IAP2 Spectrum for Public Participation is an internationally recognised tool used by Local Government. The spectrum identifies five levels of increasing community engagement.

The level of community engagement 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)**

	<b>Inform</b>	<b>Consult</b>	<b>Involve</b>	<b>Collaborate</b>	<b>Empower</b>
<b>INTENT</b>	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.
<b>PROMISE</b>	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 recognise 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.

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

## Roles and Responsibility

Community engagement is the responsibility of all Council employees.

Community has a role to play in engagement by making sure they make the most of our engagement activities on issues that are important to them.

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

Council tries to listen to all the views, needs, issues and aspirations expressed by the community through engagement. We try to balance these community views with other influences and constraints such as financial and legislative to make informed decisions.

## When CAN we engage?

- ✓ On projects or issues of significant community interest for example the development of strategies and plans.
- ✓ When a Council decision could have significant impact on the community or a stakeholder group. For example project works in a particular township
- ✓ When there is an opportunity to involve the community in decisions relating to the nature, scope, design or delivery of a project or initiative. For example, developing community facilities.
- ✓ When an outcome involves a change in services or infrastructure provided by Council. For example a change to playground equipment.
- ✓ When Council has a statutory, legislative or regulatory requirement that needs community input. For example, the Dog Management Zones.

## When can't we engage?

- ✗ When an immediate response is required, such as in an emergency situation. For example evacuating certain areas and facilities.
- ✗ When a decision must be made because of legal or safety requirements. For example, closing beach access because of contamination.
- ✗ When the activity is considered “business as usual” and there is no new information to consider. For example road maintenance.
- ✗ When community input would not influence a decision. For example, when there is already legislation in place that will determine the outcome.
- ✗ 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 you, our community is that we will report back with the results of engagement and be clear about how this information influenced the decision/topic.

We will gather 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 is essential to ensure that our Community Engagement is meaningful. We will adopt a formal, internal procedure to make sure 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 will be developed with the Communication Coordinator to make sure it fits with the aims and guiding principles of the Strategy.

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

We will review the Strategy and Procedure in full 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](http://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 Community Engagement Promise

## 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.