BARCOO SHIRE COUNCIL POLICY
COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT POLICY

Policy Number: BSC-053	Version: 2
Classification: Organisation	Section: Corporate Services
Date Adopted by Council: 17 September 2025	Resolution Number: 2025.09.011
Responsible Officer: Chief Executive Officer	Review: Note: This Policy is reviewed when any of the following occur: 1. The related information is amended or replaced. 2. Other circumstances as determined from time to time by the Chief Executive Officer. Notwithstanding the above, this Policy is to be reviewed at intervals of no more than two years.
Legislation: *Local Government Act 2009*	

OBJECTIVE

The purpose of this policy is to broadly define the framework, guiding principles and Council's commitment to meaningful community engagement as outlined in Section 4(2)(c) of the *Local Government Act 2009.*

POLICY STATEMENT

The policy responds to a high community priority for greater and more meaningful community engagement articulated through feedback as part of the community survey conducted in January/February 2021 and resultant development of the Barcoo Shire Council Corporate Plan 2021 – 2026.

The policy:

- provides the basis for the community to have an active role in contributing to Council decisions
- outlines to the community Council's genuine intention to consider community input
- increases transparency of decisions that impact the community
- builds the community's trust in Council's decision-making processes
- contributes to better outcomes for the community and Council

DEFINITION

Community engagement refers to the connections between governments, citizens and communities on a range of policy, program and service issues. It encompasses a wide variety of government–community interactions ranging from information sharing to community consultation and, in some instances, active participation in government decision making processes. Engagement can be formal or informal, direct or indirect. Effective community engagement allows government to tap into diverse perspectives and potential solutions to improve the quality of its decisions.[1]

For Barcoo Shire Council, community engagement is the activities that we use to gather and share knowledge, and interact with relevant stakeholders and the community, in order to:

- include community knowledge in the design and implementation of Barcoo Shire Council's services, strategies, programs and initiatives
- seek feedback from the community on proposed services, strategies, programs and initiatives
- develop partnerships with key stakeholders that enable the sharing of ideas, resources and responsibilities for the Barcoo Shire Council's services, strategies, programs and initiatives
- better inform the community about Barcoo Shire Council's services, strategies, programs and initiatives.

[1] Queensland Government

SCOPE

This policy relates to all areas of Council and applies to Councillors, staff, contractors and consultants supporting Council's community engagement activities.

Council is mandated to undertake public notification under several state and federal Acts and Regulations including, but not limited to, the *Local Government Act 2009* and the *Local Government Regulation 2012*, the *Sustainable Planning Act 2009* and *Land Act 1994*.

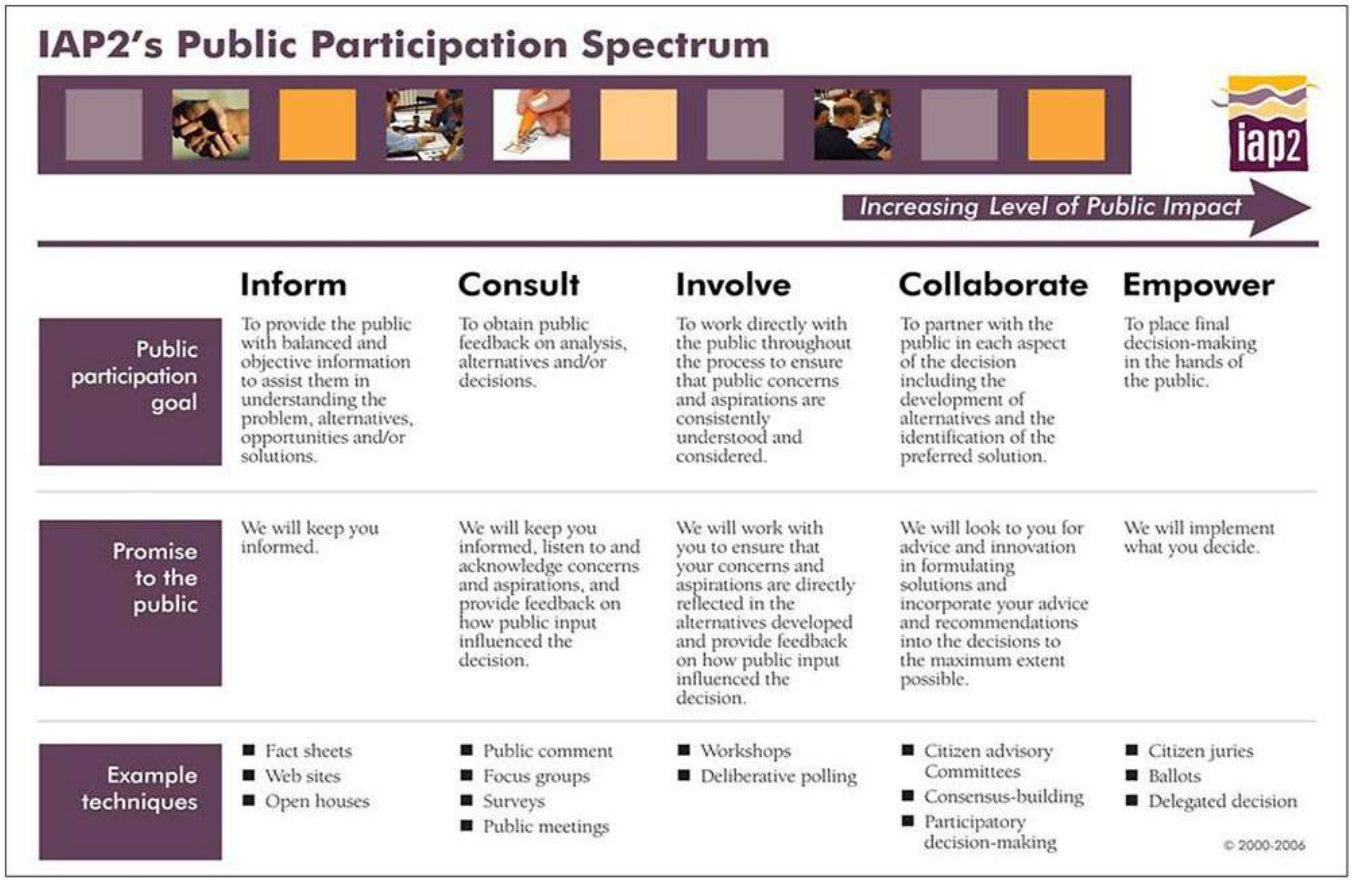
Outside these requirements where appropriate and possible, a decision should be delayed allowing time for community engagement; however, engagement is not effective or appropriate, when:

- a final decision has already been made by Council or another agency (however, every attempt should be made to engage prior to the decision being made)
- Council cannot influence a decision being made by another agency or party
- There is insufficient time available to engage due to legislative or legal constraints, or urgent issues.

For such occurrences, Council will provide information to the community relating to the reasons why engagement could not occur and why the decision has been made.

FRAMEWORK

In implementing this policy, Council will use the International Association of Public Participation's (IAP2)[2] Public Participation Spectrum as outlined below:



[2] https://www.iap2.org.au/

This policy does not outline how Council will implement its community engagement initiatives. Such detail can be sourced through Council's Community Engagement Strategy.

POLICY PRINCIPLES

Barcoo Shire Council is committed to the following engagement principles:

- Council will be transparent and inclusive in its community engagement
- Council will provide a reasonable timeframe for engagement activities, taking into account the sensitivity, importance and urgency of the matter under consideration
- Council will apply a range of community engagement methodologies appropriate to the level of the complexity of the matter under consideration
- Council will provide feedback to stakeholders to demonstrate how their input has influenced the decision-making process
- Council will strive for continuous improvement in the implementation of engagement activities
- Where Council officers initiate community engagement activities that align with the four highest levels in the IAP2 Public Participation Spectrum (Consult, Involve, Collaborate, Empower), wherever possible and appropriate, Councillors should be made aware of such activities.

LEGISLATIVE FRAMEWORK

Local Government Act 2009

ASSOCIATED DOCUMENTS

Barcoo Shire Council Corporate Plan 2021 – 2026
Barcoo Shire Council Community Engagement Strategy