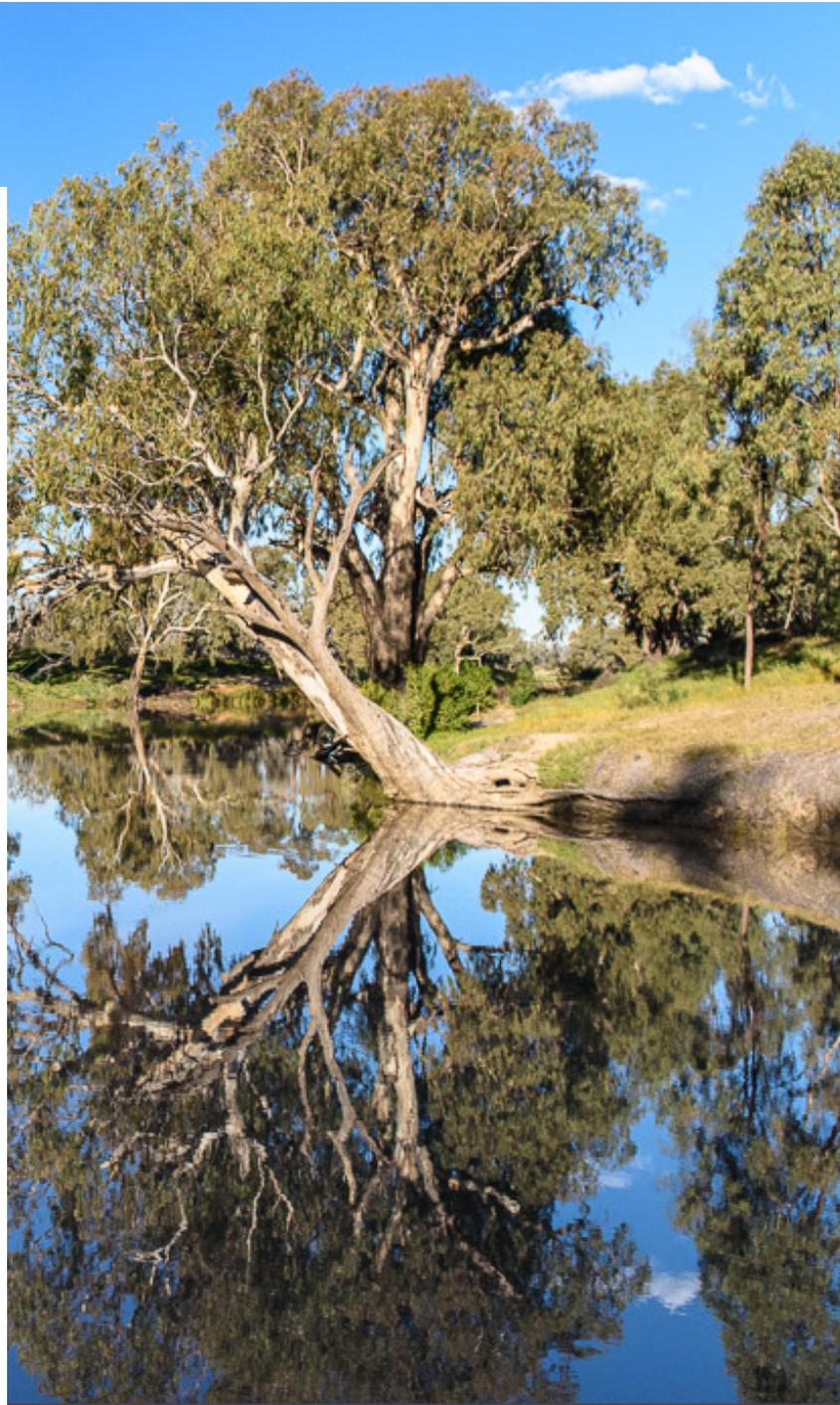


Community Engagement Strategy 2022



NOVEMBER 2021

B **BOURKE
SHIRE
COUNCIL**

Contents

Contents	2
Forward	3
Introduction	4
Background	4
When will Community Engagement occur?	5
Principles Guiding Community Engagement	5
Objectives of Community Engagement.....	7
Stakeholders and Community Engagement	8
How to ensure a high level of Community engagement.....	8
What level of Community Engagement will occur?.....	8
How will Community Engagement activities be managed?	8
Stakeholders	9
Implementation	11
Resources and Support	11
Timing	11
Evaluation	12
Evaluation of Community Engagement	12
Contact Information	12

Forward

The Integrated Planning and Reporting Framework and Community Strategic Planning has now been a part of Local Government for over ten years having been developed in 2010. Overall, this level of Strategic Planning has been very positive for Council's and Bourke Shire Council believes this planning process and consultation is very important.

Each year Council undertakes consultation with each of its Villages, the business community and various community groups in the development of its operational plan. This is as a direct result of past Community Engagement Strategies and these meetings shape the priorities of Bourke Shire Council staff and Councillors.

I welcome the update to the Community Engagement Strategy which is now presented to the Community as a draft. The consultation that will occur throughout early 2022 will shape the Community Strategic Plan 2032 and accompanying Resource Strategy.

I welcome the community's feedback in regard to the Draft Community Engagement Strategy 2022 and look forward to the coming months of consultation.

Once again thank you to the General Manager and Senior Staff in bringing the Integrated Planning process to the community.

Regards,

Cr Barry Hollman
Mayor

Introduction

Background

Community engagement is at the heart of local government. It helps communities to be active participants in shaping their own future and play a part in any change. Councils have a role in providing opportunities for community members to be involved in the strategic planning process. The Bourke Shire Community Engagement Strategy will outline how Council will engage with the community and how the community can participate in the development of the 2022 update of the Community Strategic Plan and the Integrated Planning and Reporting framework.

***“Section 402A Local Government Act 1993:
A Council must establish and implement a strategy for engagement with the local community (called its Community Engagement Strategy when developing its plans, policies and programs, and for the purpose of determining its activities (other than for routine administrative matters.”***

Community engagement can include:

- Information giving
- Information seeking (data collection/ scoping)
- information sharing
- Participatory decision making
- Responding to community-initiated issues

Community engagement, therefore, is a way of including the views of the Bourke Shire community in the Council’s planning and decision-making processes. The Council will engage the community to identify, understand and develop strategies to address and respond to their needs and concerns.

When will Community Engagement occur?

Bourke Shire Council will engage the people in the Bourke township, surrounding Villages and rural residents when:

Preparing Strategic Plans – such as development of community or land use strategic plans and projects to inform the Delivery Program and Operating Plan.

Developing Council Policy – where any internal or external policies having direct impacts on the community.

Considering site changes – where any changes are proposed to a private or public site that may have an impact on the community.

Planning Council services – when developing or improving services

Legislation requires – such as prescribed plans and projects under the Local Government Act 1993 and other relevant Acts.

Principles Guiding Community Engagement

Bourke Shire Council will adhere to the following principles in its engagement of the Bourke Community

Clarity of Purpose

It will clearly define why the engagement is occurring and its context, in order to plan and resource an effective process.

Commitment

It will demonstrate commitment to establish and maintain credibility and accountability.

Communication

It will establish a two-way process of providing accurate and timely information and demonstrate that feedback is being valued.

Evidence

It will establish good engagement practices that are based on a sound research and quality information.

Flexibility & Responsiveness

It will establish engagement plans that are flexible during the engagement process e.g., time and venue may change due to unforeseen circumstances, needs of the specific community and /or political environment.

Timeliness

It will ensure that participants know how long an engagement process is expected to last and when feedback is expected at each stage of the process.

Inclusive

It will ensure that a cross section of the Bourke community is invited to participate in each community engagement activity.

Collaboration

It will establish partnerships with relevant community groups, State and Federal Government and/or with internal department/units within Council at an appropriate level.

Continuous Learning

It will establish a reporting system to ensure that Council learns from the community engagement activity and is able to monitor and evaluate this data for future improvements.

Ethics

Members of various focus groups, along with Councillors and staff are to adhere to the relevant Code of Conduct including requirements to address pecuniary and non-pecuniary interests and to allow the views of all members to be heard in a cooperative way.

Bourke Shire Council recognize the principles of social justice in the development of the Community Engagement Strategy. These principles of equity, access, participation, and rights are understood throughout the consultation processes.

Objectives of Community Engagement

The following objectives should be observed when planning and implementing the Community Engagement Strategy.

- Ensure Council Officers understand and effectively implement the Community Engagement Strategy
- Provide the Bourke Shire Community with opportunities to participate in decision making on both present and future issues
- Ensure participants and stakeholders represent a cross section of the community
- Incorporate a range of community engagement methods that:
 - Facilitate community awareness of the engagement topic
 - Provide access to information in different community language, interpreters and / or AUSLAN interpreters for people with hearing impairment
 - Gives the customers and community opportunities to provide feedback
- Proactively and regularly inform the community about the outcomes from the community engagement activities
- Provide Council with a range of ideas, suggestions and general comments gathered from the engagement activities
- Ensure that Council, in exercising its power of decision making, is informed of and able to respond to the community needs and interest

Stakeholders and Community Engagement

How to ensure a high level of Community engagement

Just as with any engagement or consultation there is a risk that the participation of the community will not be meaningful, that the wrong information is received from the engagement, that feedback is not continuous and that participants will feel disengaged from the process. To ensure as high a level of community engagement as possible, Bourke Shire Council will ensure the following standards are met:

- All communications will meet the needs of the targeted community. Any written and/or verbal communications will be in plain English and in community language as appropriate.
- All Council Officers employed by Council involved in implementing engagement activities will have appropriate skills and experience to undertake engagement tasks
- An adequate period of notice will be given for each community engagement activity – the period may not be less than two weeks for any activity that requires people to attend or get involved in an engagement activity
- Participants will represent a cross section of the community

What level of Community Engagement will occur?

Bourke Shire Council will implement different levels of engagement depending on the issue, and its immediate or long-term impact on the community. The levels of engagement may include:

Level 1 – INFORM – Giving information to the community

Level 2 – CONSULT – Obtaining community feedback

Level 3 – INVOLVE – Participating directly with the community

Level 4 – COLLABORATE – Partnering with the community to create solutions

Level 5 – EMPOWER – Placing the final decision making in the hands of the community

How will Community Engagement activities be managed?

Each community engagement activity will be the responsibility of the Bourke Shire Council Manager/s appointed as project officer/s.

When planning community engagement, Managers need to ensure that resources (staff and finance) for engagement activities across Council are effectively allocated and managed. Where possible, engagement activities will be combined with other activities that target similar community groups.

Every effort will be made to attract and reach a cross section of the community by using a wide range of communication methods. Specific target community groups will be invited to participate as identified in the project.

Participants' cultural, and special needs will be accommodated where appropriate
Community groups who are sometimes hard to reach i.e.: children, young people, people with disabilities, women, and people from Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander backgrounds will be involved.

Stakeholders

The following stakeholder list and engagement methods have been identified to assist in developing the draft Community Strategic Plan and other plans of Bourke Shire Council.

Group	Involving	Engagement Method
Industry	Farmers Rural Counselling/ financial Services Major Business Owners Irrigators Tourism	Focus Groups Personal meeting with Exec Officers of major businesses and authorities Web Survey
Community	Schools Seniors Sporting & recreation groups Clubs Aged Community Aboriginal Community Volunteers Charitable groups Church Groups Maranguka Working Party Interagency Employment Agencies Health Services Village Groups Emergency Services General Community Youth Groups LALC's	Meeting with School Principals & PC Focus Groups Village meetings Emergency Services Interagency Web Survey Letter Drops
State and Federal Departments and agencies	State Government Department of Family and Community Services and Centrelink	Focus Groups Meetings Feedback of draft documents

	Police; Agriculture; Housing; Local Government; Lands; Aboriginal Affairs NSW; Sport & Recreation; Planning Industry and Environment, PCYC Federal Government Departments and agencies (including Health and Ageing; Housing; Community Services and Indigenous Affairs; Attorney Generals (Justice Group); Indigenous Coordination Centre; Disability Services	
State and Federal MPs	Federal Member for Parkes State Member for Barwon	Mayor and GM to discuss key issues
Joint Organisation	Member Councils	Mayor and GM to meet and discuss key issues
Council	Councillors Council staff	Web Written survey Focus Groups

Focus groups are established by Council. Membership is by invitation of the Council and expressions of interest generally advertised in the media and on the Web.

It is essential to the balanced operation of any focus/working/user group and the like that membership is reflective of all views and is regularly refreshed.

Implementation

Resources and Support

Engagement will be resourced appropriately with adequate notice, with time and staff resourcing available to undertake the engagement to a high standard.

Much of the engagement will occur at the same time with multiple engagement methods often used to maximise the community input and feedback.

Timing

Community engagement will occur throughout the development of the Community Strategic Plan and in development of all elements that make up the complete integrated plan. The timing is highlighted below.

<i>Date</i>	<i>Task</i>	<i>Includes</i>
<i>Sept-Oct 2021</i>	Review Community Engagement Strategy Present to Council as draft to October meeting. Outline to Council timeline for review of CSP	
<i>Nov 2021</i>	Community Engagement Strategy endorsed Begin internal review of Community Strategic Plan	
<i>Dec 2021- Feb 2022,</i>	Review Community Strategic Plan.	Seek input from the community on current plan and engage with stakeholders outlined Seek input from new Council Review utilisation of current Community Strategic Plan
<i>March 2022</i>	Draft Community Strategic Plan for Council consideration Public Exhibition	Utilise draft to development all Integrated Planning documents
<i>April 2022</i>	Remaining IP&R documents prepared	Delivery plan, Resource Strategy Councillor workshop
<i>May 2022</i>	Draft docs to Council for endorsement Public exhibition	All Integrated Plan documents
<i>June 2022</i>	Submissions prepared for Council consideration	All Integrated Plan documents

Evaluation

Evaluation of Community Engagement

This checklist can be used to assist in the evaluation of community engagement exercises. Council Officers will need appropriate feedback from the participants involved in order to get realistic results.

Adapt the following questions to fit the circumstances of the consultation.

QUESTIONS

	YES	NO
Were the objectives of the Community Engagement exercise clear to all involved		
Was there any legal requirement to consult with the Community?		
Who was consulted? List.		
Did you get the responses from those you most wished to ask?		
Were you successful in consulting 'hard to reach' and underrepresented Community Groups/Sectors/Members?		
Did you provide feedback to those consulted?		
Did the people you engaged with feel that the consultation was worthwhile?		
How are you aware of this?		

Contact Information

Comments and feedback on this policy are welcome and should be directed to Council's Corporate Services Manager. These can be emailed to bourkeshire@bourke.nsw.gov.au or via:

Bourke Shire Council

Address: 29 Mitchell Street, Bourke NSW 2840

Postal Address: PO Box 21 Bourke NSW 2840

Telephone: 02 68308000

Fax: 02 68723030

Office Hours: 8.00am to 4.30pm