



Maribyrnong  
CITY COUNCIL

## Attachment 1: Community Engagement Policy 2014-2017

<b>Records number:</b>		<b>Endorsed by:</b>	
<b>Date Endorsed:</b>		<b>Policy Author:</b>	Manager Strategic Marketing, Communications and Advocacy
<b>Policy Owner:</b>	Activation and Relationship Management	<b>Review date</b>	2017
<b>Policy Status:</b>		<b>Policy type</b>	Council

### REVISION RECORD

Date	Version	Revision Description

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# Introduction

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Maribyrnong City Council is home to a diverse and thriving community, who is experiencing changing demographics and community aspirations.

Maribyrnong Council has approximately 40% of its community born overseas, and 43% speak a language other than English, 10% of the municipality do not speak English well or at all.

This Policy reflects a new organisational approach to reaffirm Council's commitment to its community through community engagement and participation.

The draft Community Engagement Policy 2014-2017 clarify Council's approach to community engagement.

The draft Community Engagement Policy 2014-2017 provides guidance to the organisation through a staged, four year, strategic community engagement work plan to embed community engagement as best practice across the organisation.

The draft Community Engagement Policy 2014-2017 acknowledges Council's obligation to community engagement as set out in the Local Government Act 1989.

The draft Community Engagement Policy 2014-2017 also provide a mechanism to collect, share and enhance community project information across the organisation together with an opportunity to create an easily accessible, evolving online toolkit for Council staff to use.

# Purpose

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“A diverse and vibrant city dedicated to community wellbeing through democracy, sustainable growth and opportunity for all.”

*Council Plan 2013–17*

## Our commitment

There are four ways we are committed to engaging with our communities at Council:

- Involving our communities **decision-making**:

We are committed to developing processes to encourage greater community participation and opportunities for engagement. High-quality community engagement enables Council to make well-informed decisions at an operational and strategic level.

- **Building capacity** in our communities:

We support and develop the community’s capacity to identify their own needs, and we take action to meet these needs. We educate the community on specific themes or issues to increase knowledge or change behaviours.

- **Develop and strengthening relationships** with and within our communities:

We work to build new relationships, improve our existing relationships, and bring together impacted and interested groups within the community. To do this, we work to understand the expectations of our communities and facilitate open and transparent two-way conversations.

- **Advocating** for our communities:

We recognise our role in providing a voice for the community on important local issues and services essential to the community. We acknowledge our role in advocating to external bodies, or levels of government, on behalf of the community.

# Scope

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This policy applies to all Councillors, employees of Council and external consultants employed as representatives of Council who organise and/or convene community engagement activities in any form.

# Aims

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Aims of this policy

- **Commitment:** To articulate Council's whole-of-organisational commitment to robust and authentic community engagement processes.
- **Shared understanding:** To create a common understanding of what community engagement means to Council and the community.
- **Guidance:** To guide the planning, implementation and evaluation of community engagement processes across Council, and to better inform decisions about policy, service planning and delivery.
- **Approach:** To inform the community about Council's consistent approach to engagement activities.
- **Decision-making:** To provide opportunities for the community to contribute to decision-processes.
- **Information sharing:** To promote and share best practice consultation and community engagement.
- **Evaluation:** To evaluate community engagement and seek continual improvement.

# Strategy

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The following strategies are planned to enable Council to realise its vision.

These are prioritised initiatives that form part of a broader four year strategic community engagement plan.

- **Leadership & Champions network:** To truly embed community engagement into the organisation, a community engagement champions network will be formed within Council to bring together dedicated employees to provide a cross-organisational perspective. This will be achieved through specialised training for designated leaders and champions.
- **Toolkit:** A functional and accessible Community Engagement Toolkit will be developed or customised in collaboration with our employees. The toolkit will contain protocols, a comprehensive list of tools and techniques and templates. This will assist in the planning and design of Council community engagement processes and also embed a consistent standard of community engagement.
- **Training:** A community engagement training program will be developed to build capacity within Council and cater to the specific learning and project needs, for all staff as part of Council's Learning and Development Calendar. New Council inductees will also participate in a training module for community engagement.
- **Branding:** A name or visual device will be developed and promoted to apply to all of Council's community engagement work.
- **Digital competence** a strategy to be developed, including technical assets to confidently use social media tools for community engagement.
- **Community Voice Panel:** A broad based Community Voice Panel to be established which is appropriate and statistically correct to provide a vehicle for Council to enhance its community engagement processes.

# Definitions

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Term	Definition
Engagement	<p>Encompasses a wide variety of Council to community interactions.</p> <p>It can range from information sharing, to community consultation and, in some instances, active participation in Council decision-making processes. It is the process of purposeful and timely information exchange between the Council and our communities.</p>
Community	<p>A group of people who share something in common. It may be location, interests, culture, language, beliefs, values or traditions. Individuals can be members of many communities. Communities can also identify and form around issues. These issues may magnify the similarities or differences of community members. This may result in the identification and adoption of different methods and techniques when undertaking engagement.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Communities of place: a community of people who are bound together because of where they reside, work, visit or otherwise spend a continuous portion of their time.</li><li>• Community of interest: is a community of people who share a common interest or passion. Interests can include arts and culture, environmental sustainability, and sport and recreation.</li><li>• Communities of affiliation: is a community of people who have been brought together by an organisation, faith, membership or through other relationships.</li><li>• 'Hard to reach' communities: people can include newly arrived people, older people, people with a disability, homeless people, indigenous people, the bereaved, older migrants, children, young people, and busy people.</li></ul>

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Stakeholder	Any individual, group or organisation that may have an interest in or be affected by the workings of Council
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## Responsibilities

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The Community Engagement Policy 2014-2017 and guiding strategy is the responsibility of the Strategic Communications, Marketing and Advocacy Team, although the implementation and adherence to the Policy is a whole of Council approach.

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# Policy

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Objectives of this policy

“Council will foster a culture where individuals and diverse local communities are respected, engaged and encouraged to participate in the life, activities, and decision making of the City.”

*Council Plan 2014-2017*

# Key Stakeholders

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Internal staff and key community members assisted in the development of the Community Engagement Policy 2014-2017.

## Related Legislation

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Community engagement is required under the following legislation.

Council will adhere to the following legislative requirements as a minimum standard:

*Planning and Environment Act 1987*

*Subdivision Act 1988*

*Local Government Act 1989*

*Local Government Regulations 1990*

*Health Act 1958*

*Equal Opportunity Act 2010*

*Transport Integration Act 2010*

*Information Privacy Act 2000*

*Building Act 1993*

*Age Discrimination Act 2004*

*Disability Discrimination Act 2004*

*Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities Act 2006*

## Related Documents

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Council Plan 2013-2017

CALD Communications Strategy 2013-2016

International Association of Public Participation (IAP2)

## Review of Policy

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The date set for review of the Community Engagement Policy 2014-2017 will be four years from the date of approval, or whenever Council determines that a need has arisen unless there is a requirement for more a frequent/longer cycle.