

Community Engagement Framework



Naturally Better

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Joint introductory statement by Mayor and CEO

In 2009, the City of Tea Tree Gully undertook an organisational review, which highlighted the need for a consistent and best practice approach to community consultation.

In response to the recommendations within this review, a dedicated Community Engagement Manager was employed and a Community Engagement Framework developed. This framework provides Elected Members, staff and the community with shared principles, clear definitions and a high level view of our approach to community engagement.

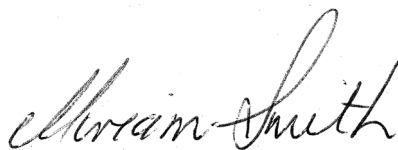
Community engagement is a continuous process that provides residents and other key stakeholders with opportunities to have a greater say in what happens in their City and to be more active in the decision making process.

It's about making sure that our community can participate in lots of different ways to make our City an even better place to live, work, visit, study and play in.

It is also about becoming more relevant to our community by ensuring we provide the most appropriate means possible for communities to get involved and give feedback on matters that have an impact on their lives.

At the heart of the community engagement framework is our genuine desire to strengthen and build relationships with our key stakeholders. We can do this by communicating openly and clearly and actively listening. To achieve this we will ensure that our community engagement strategies and activities are developed and delivered as effectively as possible.

Elected Members and staff are committed to engaging with our community and key stakeholders in order to gain a greater understanding of the interests, needs and aspirations to allow better informed decision making.



Miriam Smith
Mayor



Di Rogowski
Chief Executive Officer

Introduction

Making decisions on behalf of 100,000 people is no easy task, so it is important for Council to take into account the views of the community when making decisions or choosing a direction on particular issues.

The trust and confidence a community has in its council can depend on the extent to which the community is engaged in key decisions and on issues that have an impact on their lives.

Councillors are elected to make decisions on behalf of and in the best interests of their community. At the City of Tea Tree Gully, we believe that good decision making requires good quality information to assist and inform that decision making. Responsive and accountable governance is based on the belief that those impacted by an issue have important information and contributions to make.

However, it should be noted that local government is not government by referendum. Under the Local Government Act 1999, the only decision making power placed in the hands of the public is that of electing council members every four years.

Ultimately, by undertaking high quality community engagement activities, Council will gain a better understanding of the range of community opinions about a particular issue, and can use this information to inform its

decision making considerations.

This document is designed to provide a framework for Elected Members, staff (including external contractors and consultants) and the City of Tea Tree Gully community, setting out shared principles, clear definitions and a high level view of our approach to community engagement. The framework is supported by the following documents and resources:

- A Community Engagement (Public Consultation) Policy – which provides the legislative requirements and policy directions for community engagement within the City of Tea Tree Gully
- A Community Engagement Handbook & Toolkit – which provides guidance on when to engage and the appropriate level of engagement. The handbook and toolkit also provide practical step-by-step instructions, procedures and templates on how to engage and guidance on the planning of engagement activities, as well as how to evaluate engagement activities
- Community Engagement Support Structures and Resources – which provide a range of strategic advice, support and resources to assist in designing high quality engagement processes and activities.

What is community engagement?

There is no right or wrong definition of community engagement. It is a broad term describing a variety of ways to communicate, consult, involve and encourage participation between the community and Council.

The International Association of Public Participation (IAP2) is the leading organisation in developing, supporting and promoting best practice community engagement around the world.

IAP2 defines community engagement as:

“Any process that involves the community in problem solving or decision making and uses community input to make better decisions.”

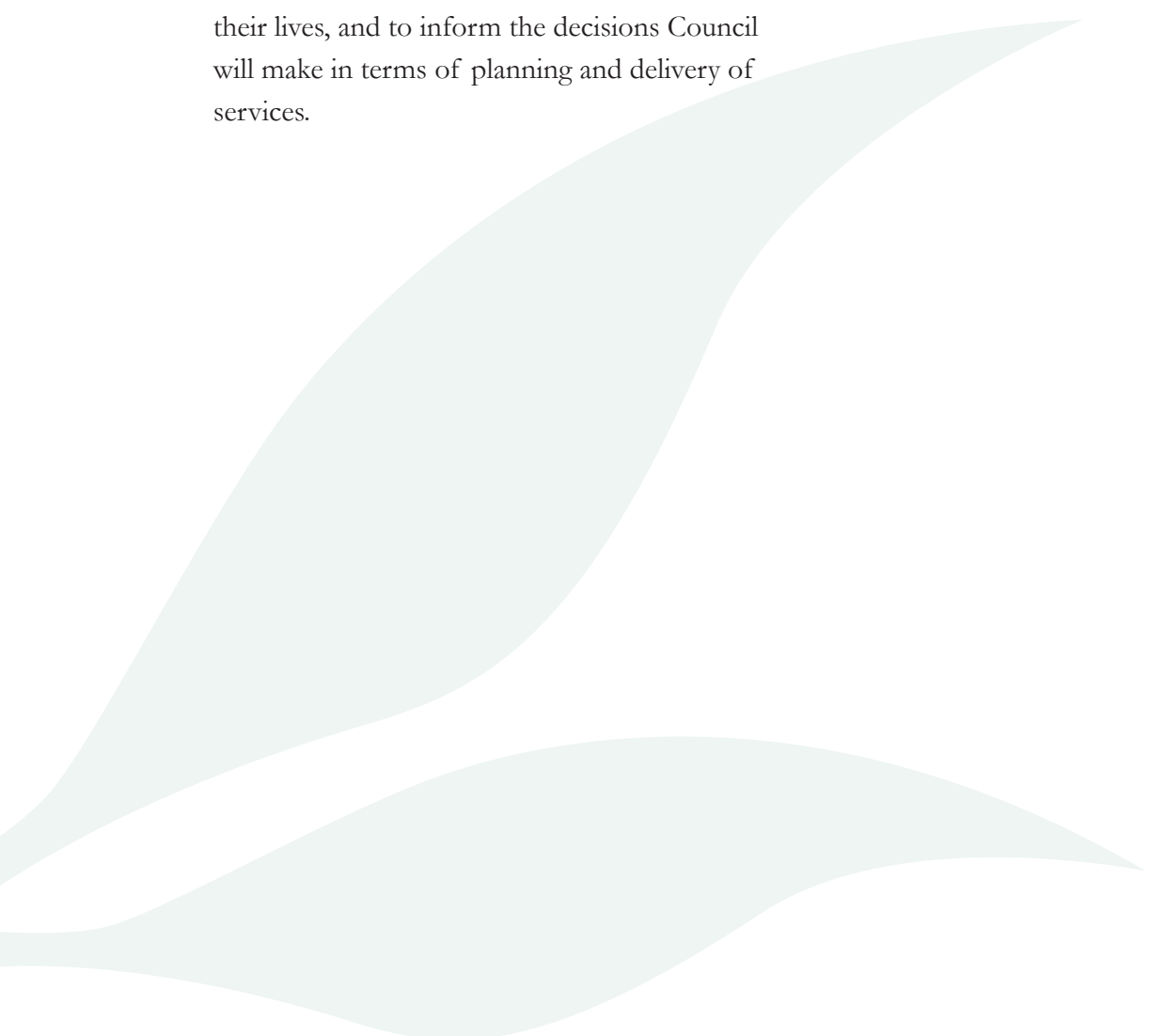
This definition clearly highlights that community engagement is about making decisions and about better decision making.

Further, it is important to define what community engagement is and what it is not:

- Community engagement is a process, not an outcome or a solution. The objectives and parameters of any engagement processes need to be stated in a transparent way to avoid creating unrealistic expectations in the community.
- Community engagement is a way to assist the decision making process. It is not intended to replace the final decision making power of Elected Members, the Chief Executive Officer (CEO) or their delegate.
- Meaningful community engagement means good quality processes that endeavour to gain an objective, representative view from the broader community and relevant stakeholders, and are not limited to the views of a vocal minority.
- Good decisions are informed by: listening to diverse perspectives, gathering sound information, considering a range of opinions and alternatives and identifying common ground.

The aim of the Community Engagement Framework

The aim of Council's Community Engagement Framework is to ensure that people who live or work in our City, access our Council services or participate in recreation activities within our City have the opportunity to provide feedback on and influence the development of plans, policies and strategies that will have an effect on their lives, and to inform the decisions Council will make in terms of planning and delivery of services.

A decorative graphic consisting of two overlapping, light green, wavy shapes that resemble stylized leaves or flowing water. The shapes originate from the left side of the page and curve towards the right, with the top shape being larger and more prominent than the bottom one.

The objectives of the Community Engagement Framework

- To ensure our Elected Members and Council staff (including external contractors and consultants) have a clear understanding of and a commitment to engaging with the community about decisions that will have an effect on their lives.
- To ensure there is a coordinated and consistent approach to community engagement across our City.
- To ensure all community engagement strategies and activities are carried out to the highest possible national and international standards.
- To ensure City of Tea Tree Gully community engagement strategies and activities are inclusive of and accessible to all members of the community. The feedback from the community will be listened to, respected and taken into account.

Council's community engagement principles

The following principles underpin the City of Tea Tree Gully's approach to community engagement. In order to ensure organisational best practice, this framework has been developed according to the following principles:

- **Inclusive participation:** Council believes that all members of the City of Tea Tree Gully community have a right to be informed about and involved in key decisions affecting their area, lifestyles and particular interests.
- **Open and transparent disclosure:** Council is committed to ensuring that the community has all the relevant information to participate in community engagement activities in a meaningful way. All of our engagement materials will use plain language and we will ensure they are easy to find and accessible to all.
- **Engage early and with clarity of purpose:** Council will undertake community engagement and consultation processes that will provide real opportunities for the community to influence a decision. We will clearly communicate the aims and objectives of all community engagement activities and what we hope to achieve.
- **Design & implementation of good quality engagement processes, tools and methods:** Council will ensure that all community engagement processes are well designed to fit the scope and nature of the project. Careful planning of engagement strategies and activities will ensure that a minimum of 20 business days are available for the community to consider and respond.
- **Consideration of engagement outcomes and provision of feedback:** Council will carefully consider all contributions and relevant information prior to making decisions that impact local community interests. We are committed to providing open and honest feedback to the community on engagement activities and how the community's contribution has influenced Council's decision.

Who we engage

What do we mean when we use the word 'community'?

Communities of place: where people identify with a defined geographical area, eg a council ward, a housing development or a neighborhood.

Communities of interest: where people share a particular experience, interest or characteristic such as young people, faith groups, older people, people with a disability, migrant groups, community or sporting groups.

A snapshot of the City of Tea Tree Gully

The information is taken from the 2006 Census conducted by the Australian Bureau of Statistics and shows demographical (or population) changes that have occurred since the 2001 Census.

Key statistics (summary statistics)	City of Tea Tree Gully 2006			2001			Change 2001 to 2006
	number	%	Adelaide Statistical Division %	number	%	Adelaide Statistical Division %	
Enumerated data							
Enumerated population, excluding overseas visitors							
Total population (b)	94,026	100.0	100.0	95,102	100.0	100.0	-1,076
Males (b)	46,009	48.9	48.7	46,528	48.9	48.7	-519
Females (b)	48,017	51.1	51.3	48,574	51.1	51.3	-557
Population characteristics							
Indigenous population	694	0.7	1.1	630	0.7	1.0	64
Australian born	68,827	73.2	70.7	69,548	73.1	72.2	-721
Overseas born	21,549	22.9	23.7	22,485	23.6	23.6	-936
Australian citizens	84,498	89.9	87.4	86,138	90.6	89.8	-1,640
Australian citizens aged 18+	63,743	67.8	67.6	63,349	66.6	68.4	394
Institutional population	1,039	1.1	3.0	848	0.9	2.7	191
Age structure							
Infants 0 to 4 years	5,506	5.9	5.7	6,174	6.5	5.9	-668
Children 5 to 17 years	17,006	18.1	16.3	18,051	19.0	17.1	-1,045
Adults 18 to 64 years	60,482	64.3	62.9	61,713	64.9	62.3	-1,231
Mature adults 65 to 84 years	9,955	10.6	13.0	8,400	8.8	12.8	1,555
Senior citizens 85 years and over	1,080	1.1	2.1	764	0.8	1.8	316
Households and dwellings							
Owned	12,390	34.4	32.6	13,859	39.3	38.7	-1,469
Purchasing	15,638	43.4	34.3	14,242	40.3	30.2	1,396
Renting	6,044	16.8	26.0	5,603	15.9	25.6	441
Households (occupied private dwellings)	36,028	--	--	35,306	--	--	722
Persons counted in households	93,425	--	--	94,692	--	--	-1,267
Average household size (persons)	2.59	--	--	2.68	--	--	-0.09
Total Dwellings	37,892	100.0	100.0	36,654	100.0	100.0	1,238

Note:

The total population figure stated above is not the official population of the City of Tea Tree Gully as it does not account for residents that may have missed the Census count for some reason. A more accurate estimation of population conducted by the Australian Bureau of Statistics is the Estimated Resident Population (ERP). The current ERP for the City of Tea Tree Gully is 100,593 (as at 30 June 2011). Further demographic information about our City can be obtained from our Community Profile, which is available online – www.id.com.au/teatreegully/commprofile

Why engage?

Community engagement provides a way for decision makers within our City to do a better job, and the means to connect and stay connected with our communities of place and communities of interest in order to further develop relationships and inform decision making processes.

Community engagement can help Elected Members and staff to:

- Minimise risks to health, safety and the environment and manage outrage by identifying and addressing potential and existing concerns or conflicts early before they escalate
- Communicate with stakeholders and gather a broader range of views and information prior to making decisions
- Build strong cooperative working relationships with the community
- Promote a positive perception of our Council within the community
- Plan and prioritise services and make better

use of resources

- Build community support for Council services, policies and programs
- Reduce delays in implementing new services, projects or initiatives

From a community perspective, timely and well planned community engagement activities provide individuals and groups with opportunities to have a say about what is happening in their community and to contribute in meaningful ways.

In developing an effective community engagement framework for the City of Tea Tree Gully, we have considered best practice in the determining and planning of engagement activities. We have also considered how best to connect with all members of the community including the hard to reach, such as young people, people with a disability, culturally and linguistically diverse people, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders and people who are socially excluded.

When and how we engage

We believe that the level of engagement with the community will vary depending on the community interest in the topic, political sensitivity, level of social, economic and environmental impact, the number of persons potentially affected by the topic and the requirements for consultation set out in the Local Government Act and other relevant key Acts. To help Elected Members and staff to determine the best approach the following

table below will assist in selecting the most appropriate level of engagement. The table has been adapted from The International Association for Public Participation (IAP2) Spectrum. The IAP2 and the 2008 LGA Community Engagement Handbook identifies and defines the various levels of community engagement and that terminology has been adapted for use as follows.

Level	Goal	City of Tea Tree Gully's Approach	Examples of Tools & Techniques
Inform	One way communication providing balanced and objective information to assist understanding about something that is going to happen or has happened.	We will share information about a decision or direction.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Website ✓ Advertisements in local media ✓ Letters ✓ Brochures/fact sheets ✓ Displays ✓ Fairs/events ✓ Flyer in rates notices ✓ Banners in key locations ✓ Social media e.g. Blogs, Facebook & Twitter
Consult	Two way communications designed to obtain public feedback about ideas on rationale, alternatives and proposals to inform decision making.	We will explore options, gain feedback and an understanding of your preferences.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Surveys/market research ✓ CTTG online Community Panel ✓ Public feedback/ Submissions ✓ Public & online forums ✓ Focus groups ✓ Face to face interviews with stakeholders ✓ Social media e.g. Blogs, Facebook & Twitter
Involve	Participatory process designed to help identify issues and views to ensure that concerns and aspirations are understood and considered prior to decision making.	Your ideas and issues will be reflected in the final decision or recommendations.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Facilitated workshops/ ✓ Charrettes ✓ Deliberative polling ✓ World Café ✓ Networks such as Youth Action
Collaborate	Working together to develop an understanding of all issues and interests to work out alternatives and identify preferred solutions.	Your recommendations will be included in the final decision.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Advisory or reference groups ✓ Committees & panels

It should be noted that the IAP2 Spectrum includes “empower” as a level of community engagement, whereby final decision making is in the hands of the public. However as previously mentioned, under the Local Government Act 1999, the only decision making power which is placed in the hands of the public is that of electing Council Members every four years.

Before embarking on any community engagement process or activities it is critical to establish with all decision makers how much influence they are prepared to give the community on the matter at hand.

Inform

Elected Members and staff, recognise that there are some situations that the community needs to receive further information or gain a deeper understanding about an issue or a decision that has been made. If the aim is to just provide information about a decision or outcome, who made the decision, why it was made and its impact on the community then **Inform** is the appropriate level of engagement. An example of this would be a letter written to residents who may be impacted on by the installation of a traffic management device.

Consult/Involve

Where Elected Members or staff seek input and feedback from the community to better inform their decision the appropriate levels of engagement are **Consult** and/or **Involve**. An example of this would be the community engagement activities Council has undertaken in drafting our Strategic Plan and the City Master Plan.

Collaborate

In instances where there is an intention for Elected Members or staff to mutually share the decision making with members of the community or community groups then **Collaborate** is the appropriate level of engagement. An example of this would be the CTTG Reconciliation Sub Committee (which consists of community members, Elected Members and local service providers) and the development of the Reconciliation Garden in Civic Park.

Community engagement resources

Further information and guidance regarding selecting the appropriate level of engagement can be obtained from the following supporting documents and resources:

City of Tea Tree Gully Community Engagement (Public Consultation) Policy

This policy provides the legislative requirements and policy directions for community engagement within the City of Tea Tree Gully.

City of Tea Tree Gully Community Engagement Handbook & Toolkit

These provide guidance on when to engage and the appropriate level of engagement. The handbook and toolkit also provide practical step-by-step instructions on how to engage and the planning of engagement activities, as well as how to evaluate engagement activities.

Community engagement support structures

In addition to the policy, handbook and tool kit, to ensure the Elected Members and staff adhere to the aims, objectives and principles outlined in this document, the following support structures will be established:

The Community Engagement Department

The Community Engagement Department will provide high level support and advice to staff and Elected Members to enable them to apply the framework and policy and to use the toolkit,

templates and resources that are available. This support may include facilitating an engagement planning session early in the project, assisting to identify an appropriate approach to specific engagement activities and providing advice throughout the project as required (including interpretation of engagement outcomes) and the co-ordination, design and analysis of surveys and market research.

Community Engagement staff have expertise in a number of relevant key areas such as social and market research, facilitation and communications relating to community engagement. They are also experienced in designing, managing and evaluating successful stakeholder engagement processes on a range of matters and issues. It is expected that any advice provided by the department will be followed unless overruled by the CEO.

Community engagement champions

Ongoing in-house training and development will be provided to key managers and staff who will become community engagement ‘champions’ within each department of Council. Champions will provide advice and support to their team regarding community engagement activities.

Community engagement activities & stakeholders database

A centralised reference point for past, current and planned engagement strategies and activities will be available. This will allow staff planning or considering engagement activities to browse

activities and outcomes, share ideas and identify best practice.

To assist in identifying and building stronger relationships with key community stakeholders, a regularly updated organisation-wide database will be established providing contact names and details of community stakeholders including key service providers, community, special interest faith and sporting groups.

Community engagement calendar/forward works program

An up-to-date calendar of community engagement activities will be available to assist staff in planning engagement activities to avoid duplication of engagement processes and identify areas where combined community engagement can be carried out.

Community engagement resources

In addition to the staff handbook and toolkit, a library of documents (hard and soft copies) will be available to staff via the Community Engagement Department. This will include resources for best practice in community engagement strategies; legislation; research and theory; facilitation of meeting and workshops (using interpreters where required) and meeting the needs of different as well as new and emerging communities e.g. business and hard to engage groups.

Glossary

Social media

Social media includes various online technology tools that enable people to communicate and network easily via the internet to share information and resources. Examples of social media are Facebook and Twitter.

Blog

A blog is a contraction of the term 'weblog'. It is a type of website, usually maintained by an individual, that is regularly updated and contains commentary, descriptions of events sometimes with accompanying material such as graphics and video.

Facebook

Facebook is a social networking website. Users set up a profile using an email address and are able to interact with others and share information, photos etc.

Twitter

Twitter is a social networking and instant messaging site that allows people to send brief text messages up to 140 characters in length to a list of followers.

Online forum

An online forum is an online discussion site that enables people to hold conversations in the form of posted messages.

Focus groups

A focus group is a small discussion group about

a research topic led by a moderator who guides discussion among the participants. A focus group is a form of qualitative research, which is typically unstructured in format and is used to gain a deeper understanding of issues and motivations; why people have the beliefs and/or attitudes they do or why they behave in a particular way.

Charrette

A charrette is an intense brainstorming and decision-making process. It brings together all relevant stakeholders for a prolonged meeting or series of meetings in an attempt to generate a broad range of options, criteria for decision-making and a final decision while all decision makers are present. (IAP2)

Deliberative polling

Deliberative polling measure informed opinion on an issue. A randomly recruited group of people are informed via briefing notes and access to experts on a particular issue and have time to consider the issue in detail. Views are recorded on a particular issue before and after the poll and changes in opinion are measured.

World café

A meeting process featuring a series of simultaneous conversations in response to predetermined questions. Participants change tables during the process and focus on identifying common ground in response to each question (IAP2)



C I T Y O F

TEA TREE GULLY

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