
Community Engagement Action Plan

2015 - 2019



Latrobe City
a new energy

Introduction

The Community Engagement Strategy 2015-2019 sets out Council's objectives in relation to community engagement and the guidelines of successful engagement. This Community Engagement Action Plan has been developed in response to the Strategy to explain Council's commitments and how it plans to deliver on the objectives outlined in the Strategy.

The Action Plan aims to provide Council with clear and relevant directions for community engagement initiatives and activities. Each objective outlines the requirements and commitments for all staff. The Action Plan also nominates those responsible for completing the different key actions and the timeframes in which they will be completed.

Community Engagement Policy

The Community Engagement Policy is the overarching document that sets the standards and principles of Community Engagement at Latrobe City Council.

Community Engagement Strategy 2015-2019

The Community Engagement Strategy sets out Council's objectives in relation to Community Engagement and the guidelines of successful engagement.

Community Engagement Toolkit

The Community Engagement Toolkit provides relevant tools and templates which will be utilised by staff undertaking community engagement activities to ensure a consistent and considered approach.

Community Engagement Action Plan

2015-2019

The Community Engagement Action Plan 2015-2019 outlines in detail Council's key commitments and actions to continually improve its community engagement practice over the next two years.

Objective 1 – Improved Understanding

Strengthen mutual understanding of why and how Council will engage - expectations, limitations, Council's capacity to deliver, Council's responsibility to be sustainable and the legislative frameworks that it operates within. Strengthen Council's understanding of community views, expectations, hopes, aspirations and service requirements and build community confidence in Council's community engagement processes.

We will:

- Communicate to the community through different platforms to convey the importance of community engagement and why Council undertakes community engagement activities.
- Utilise different methods of community engagement to provide the community with opportunities to be participate and learn about community engagement through their personal experience.
- Actively engage decision makers (Councillors / CEO) to assist with the promotion of community engagement and build the community's confidence in the process.
- Endeavour to provide more face to face community engagement opportunities to raise awareness of Council initiatives and community engagement activities.

Key actions

Item No.	Actions	Responsibility	Timeframe	Measurement	Outcome	Budget
1.1	Develop a series of video clips and interactive tools that explain how the community can provide input.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Community Engagement • Communications 	Ongoing	Number of views per video clip and / or hits to relevant webpage.	Increased understanding and knowledge of the value of community involvement in Council initiatives.	2015/16 \$10,000 2016/17 \$10,000

Item No.	Actions	Responsibility	Timeframe	Measurement	Outcome	Budget
1.2	Schedule four Councillor community briefings.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Community Engagement Mayoral and Council Support Newly elected Councillors 	Early 2017	Number of briefings held. Participation level.	Build the community's relationship with Councillors.	2016/17 \$12,000
1.3	Conduct community engagement seminars for community groups.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Community Engagement Community Development 	December 2016	Number of seminars held. Participation level. Seminar feedback survey results.	Increased understanding of community engagement, how to utilise community engagement activities and provide input, how to raise matters with Council for consideration.	2016/17 \$2000
1.4	Assess existing customer management systems for opportunities to effectively capture and use data to better address community needs.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Community Information Services Information Services Community Engagement Communications 	December 2016	Analysis of available data, gaps and opportunities.	Map of available data and how it can be utilised by the organisation.	Staff time
1.5	Utilise customer and engagement data to analyse emerging trends and issues to drive service enhancements and demonstrate Council's responsiveness to community input.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Community Information Services Information Services Community Engagement Communications 	Ongoing, following completion of action 1.4	Trend identification. Business enhancement development.	Data informed service development and enhancements.	Staff time
1.6	Develop strategies to engage with online communities and bloggers.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Communications Community Engagement 	June 2018	Strategies developed and implemented.	Increase in online engagement.	Staff time

Objective 2 - Enabling Involvement

Actively encourage and enable community members to engage with Council. Reduce barriers to involvement, co-create engagement opportunities with the community and establish processes and systems which will, in the future, enable Council to capture feedback and citizen engagement through all Council community touch points.

We will:

- Ensure community engagement opportunities are open for a minimum of four (4) weeks, keeping in consideration the impact of public holiday and school holiday periods
- Encourage community participation utilising our existing engagement tools, in particular the Community Sounding Board
- Consider accessibility requirements when selecting engagement methods, communication tools and physical venues.
- Continually review current methods of communication, in particular Council's website, to ensure resources are relevant and navigation is easy
- Ensure there is a variety of different platforms (electronic, hard copy and face to face) available for the community to provide input to Council
- Work with local community groups, community committees and community advisory groups to improve and develop new community engagement methods and tools to increase participation in Council's community engagement activities
- Continually be open to new methods of engagement and consider ways to improve existing methods

Key actions

Item No.	Actions	Responsibility	Timeframe	Measurement	Outcome	Budget
2.1	Develop a series of promotions and events to build the Community Sounding Board membership and participation.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Community Engagement 	Ongoing	Number of participants receiving monthly newsletter and clicking on participation links.	Seeking an annual increase of 25% in Community Sounding Board membership. An annual increase in the click-through rate.	2015/16 \$2,500 2016/17 \$10,000

Item No.	Actions	Responsibility	Timeframe	Measurement	Outcome	Budget
2.2	Promote community participation in Council's social media platforms to enable two way communication and engagement.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Community Engagement 	Ongoing	'Likes' to Council social media pages and levels of interaction	<p>Seeking an annual increase of 1000 followers.</p> <p>A continuous increase in community participation in Council's social media (likes, comments, shares, reach).</p>	Staff time
2.3	Promote Council committees and the opportunity to take part to attract new members and secure involvement from a diverse range of community members	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Committee members / administrators User group owners 	Ongoing	Monitor membership numbers of Council committees and user groups.	Increase in new members participating in Council committees and user groups.	Staff time
2.4	Engage Council committees as partners in community engagement; actively engage committees, advisory groups and networks when seeking community feedback.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Whole of Council; divisions with Council committee responsibilities. 	Ongoing	Number of council committees providing input into Council's activities.	Greater involvement by Council committees in the decision making landscape	Staff time
2.5	Ensure that community engagement activities are effectively scheduled throughout the year	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Community Engagement Project Managers 	Ongoing	Planned schedule of upcoming community engagement activities	Reduction of 'engagement fatigue' in the community and enhanced organisation efficiency by teaming up to engage on multiple topics where possible.	Staff time

Objective 3 - Communication and Feedback

Ensure effective communication and feedback processes are consistently used to assist community members to understand, and have confidence in, the community engagement process. For Council-led engagement, this includes communicating how community input has contributed to Council's decision making process.

We will:

- Proactively communicate all opportunities to provide input to ensure that those who are impacted by or interested in a decision have the opportunity to be informed and/or have a say
- Ensure that all information available to our community online meets Accessibility Content Guidelines.
- Provide community engagement participants with timely and relevant feedback throughout the entire community engagement process
- Provide community engagement participants with information on the final decision made by Council and how their contribution was considered when making the final decision
- Ensure the final outcome is communicated effectively and available to all community members through a variety of different channels

Key Actions

Item No.	Actions	Responsibility	Timeframe	Measurement	Outcome	Budget
3.1	Develop and promote an e-newsletter to distribute the Council Meeting Round-Up to subscribed community members.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Communications 	December 2015	Number of participants receiving newsletter.	Increased community understanding of the decision making process.	2015/16 \$200
3.2	Develop an SMS database of community members who wish to be kept updated on Council engagement activities.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Community Engagement • Information Technology 	December 2016	Number of participants subscribing to SMS alerts.	Increased promotion of opportunities for community members to have a say.	2016/17 \$5,000

Item No.	Actions	Responsibility	Timeframe	Measurement	Outcome	Budget
3.3	Actively use the Community Sounding Board and the 'Have Your Say' section of the website to inform the community of community engagement outcomes.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Project Managers Community Engagement 	Ongoing	Number of projects which include final information on project outcomes.	Increased community understanding of the decision making process and how their input was considered.	Staff time
3.4	Include a post-decision-making feedback template in the Community Engagement Toolkit for staff to utilise for communicating with the community.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Community Engagement 	February 2016	Undertake internal measurement of the usefulness effectiveness of feedback templates to ensure they provide for the purpose.	<p>Effective and easily available community feedback tools.</p> <p>Increased community understanding of the decision making process and how their input was considered.</p>	Staff time
3.5	Develop an online tracker to provide a visual overview of progress on major projects and initiatives delivered in service of Council's Plan.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Communications Corporate Strategy 	June 2017	Clear and accessible overview of the status of key projects on Council's website.	Increased community understanding of the work being undertaken by Council.	2016/17 \$10,000
3.6	Utilise messages on hold to promote Council's community engagement activities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Community Information Services 	June 2016	On hold message advises listener about community engagement opportunities and how to get more information.	Increased promotion of opportunities for community members to have a say.	Staff time

Item No.	Actions	Responsibility	Timeframe	Measurement	Outcome	Budget
3.7	Identify opportunities for pop-up online customer service to enhance customer engagement.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Communications • Community Information Services • Information Technology 	December 2017	Implementation of a pop-up window on the website that provides live assistance to the visitor on Council matters.	Live customer service response is extended from face to face and phone to include online assistance.	2017/18 \$25,000
3.8	Report on the number of community engagement activities undertaken by Council in Council's Annual Report.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Community Engagement 	Annually	Number of community engagement activities undertaken.	Transparency in reporting to community on their opportunity to be involved in Council's decision-making process.	Staff time
3.9	Identify opportunities to ensure that Councillors are effectively informed about upcoming community engagement activities.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Community Engagement • Project Managers 	December 2015	Effective communication methods in place.	Councillors are informed early in the process of community engagement.	Staff time

Objective 4 - Decision Making

Embrace a collective and cooperative decision making approach where community input and feedback is recognised as enhancing the richness of Council's decision making processes.

Provide decision makers with the best quality information available to support effective, responsive and sustainable decisions to be made. These decisions should consider the perspectives of those who are impacted by or interested in the decision.

We will:

- Endeavour to actively involve community members which are most heavily impacted by a decision in community engagement activities and ensure that their input is provided to decision makers.
- Ensure that decision makers are provided with the results of community engagement activities in a Councillor briefing session, prior to any final decision making process being undertaken at a Council meeting
- Ensure that all information provided to decision makers is relevant, accurate, complete and balanced
- Endeavour to ensure all relevant and accurate information obtained through community engagement is fairly and objectively considered by decision makers.
- Provide community engagement information in a consistent format to decision makers.

Key actions

Item No.	Actions	Responsibility	Timeframe	Measurement	Outcome	Budget
4.1	Create community engagement report templates for Councillor Briefings and Ordinary Council Meetings.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Community Engagement • Council Operations 	June 2016	Templates are implemented and available in Info Council.	Consistent reports provided to Councillors regarding the results of Community Engagement activities	Staff time

Objective 5 - Continual Improvement

Continually develop and improve Council's community engagement practices and capacity through regular review and improvement mechanisms.

We will:

- Ensure that advice and support is available to Council staff planning or undertaking community engagement activities
- Ensure community engagement training is made available to all Council staff at both a foundation and advanced level
- Ensure community engagement templates and tools are relevant, accessible and available to all Council staff
- Empower all Council staff with community engagement responsibilities and encourage a proactive attitude towards community engagement

Key Actions

Item No.	Actions	Responsibility	Timeframe	Measurement	Outcome	Budget
5.1	Develop and roll out a Community Engagement Toolkit to the organisation that contains relevant tools and templates which will be utilised by staff that conducts community engagement activities.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Community Engagement 	February 2016	Undertake internal measurement of the usefulness and effectiveness of tools and templates provided.	Effective and consistent community engagement activities conducted by Council staff	Staff time

Item No.	Actions	Responsibility	Timeframe	Measurement	Outcome	Budget
5.2	Implement an online engagement tool which provides a new method of interaction and which captures and enables effective evaluation of community input	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Community Engagement 	June 2016	<p>Level of uptake of the online engagement tool.</p> <p>Increased level of participation in online engagement opportunities.</p>	<p>Enhancing opportunity for participation through a different channel, in addition to other planned activities.</p> <p>Improved ability to capture, evaluate and report on community input.</p>	Annual subscription \$25,000
5.3	<p>Arrange regular community engagement training (both foundation and advanced levels).</p> <p>Actively advertise and target participation of key Council staff to refine their skills and knowledge of best practice community engagement.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Learning and Development 	Ongoing, minimum twice yearly	<p>Number of scheduled training opportunities available.</p> <p>Number of staff completing each level of training.</p>	Continued development of Council staff understanding and knowledge of best practice community engagement.	Annual allocation \$22,000
5.4	Undertake a review of Community Engagement training program to ensure that it still meets the needs of the organisation.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Community Engagement 	December 2017	<p>Results of feedback survey with participants about the delivery, content and effectiveness of the training and the instructor.</p> <p>Benchmarking exercise against other industry standard</p>	Understanding of the training's effectiveness and possible improvements or changes that need to be made.	Staff time

Item No.	Actions	Responsibility	Timeframe	Measurement	Outcome	Budget
				programs		
5.5	Undertake a review of the Community Engagement Strategy and Action Plan 2015-19 to ensure that community expectations are met and that the actions meet the community, organisation and changing environment needs.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Community Engagement 	June 2018	Results of feedback from community, Council staff and management regarding the delivery, content and effectiveness of community engagement activities, tools and training.	<p>Increased understanding of community, staff and management expectations of community engagement.</p> <p>Understanding of which areas of community engagement need improvement.</p>	2017/18 \$3,000
5.6	Develop a new Community Engagement Strategy and Action Plan to capture emerging opportunities and take Latrobe City Council forward in the engagement space.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Community Engagement 	June 2019	Adoption of the new documents by Council in early 2019.	Clear direction for the Latrobe City Council on how to deliver on their community engagement commitments beyond 2019.	Staff time