

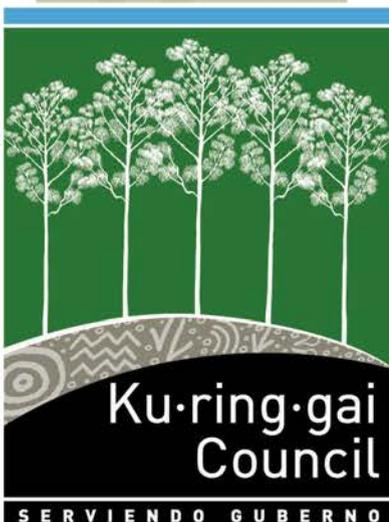
Ku-ring-gai Council

Community Consultation Policy

Version Number 2

Adopted: 6/12/2016

Effective: 7/12/2016



Community Consultation Policy

Table of Contents

Controlled Document Information	3
Authorisation Details	3
Related Document Information, Standards & References	3
Version History	4
Policy	5
Purpose and Objectives	5
Scope	5
Responsibilities	6
Policy Statement	7
Benefits of Effective Community Consultation	7
Principles	8
Definitions	9

Controlled Document Information

Authorisation Details

This is a Controlled Document. Before using this document check it is the latest version by referring to Council's Controlled Document Register. Unless otherwise indicated, printed or downloaded versions of this document are uncontrolled.			
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Related Document Information, Standards & References

Related Legislation:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Local Government Act (NSW)1993 • Local Government (General) Regulation 2005 • Environment, Planning and Assessment Act (NSW) 1979 • Government Information (Public Access) Regulation 2009 • Privacy and Personal Information Protection Act (NSW) 1998 	
Related Policies (Council & Internal)	None	
Related Documents - Procedures, Guidelines, Forms, WHS Modules/PCD's, Risk Assessments, Work Method Statements, etc	Community consultation Guidelines 2008 International Association for Public Participation (2005) Planning for effective public participation	
Other References	None	

Version History

Version Number	Version Start Date	Version End Date	Author	Details and Comments
1	22/07/2008	6/12/2016	Virginia Leafe	First version.
2	7/12/2016	(date version ceased to be in effect)	William Adames	<p>Minor wording updates in Policy Statement to reflect slight changes in approach to how community consultation is delivered:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) To ensure Council produces better, more accurate and representative engagement outputs to inform Council decision-making. 2) To ensure community members involved with Council's engagement projects are informed about the project outcomes and where possible how their input influenced the project that outcome.

Policy

Purpose and Objectives

Ku-ring-gai Council issues this policy to ensure that it provides all sectors of the community a range of equitable, accessible and appropriate opportunities to participate in Council consultation activities on matters that may be of specific interest, or have a significant immediate or long-term impact on the community.

The policy supports Council's willingness to engage the community of Ku-ring-gai to contribute to accountable and transparent decision-making processes.

The objectives of the policy are to:

- ensure that Council is informed of and able to respond to community needs and aspirations;
- provide all sectors of the community accessible and appropriate opportunities to participate in decision making on both present and future issues;
- provide unbiased, objective and accurate research and subsequent reporting to our community, Councillors and managers on the results of relevant consultations, to aid decision making and priority setting for Ku-ring-gai;
- incorporate a range of engagement methods that identify and report on key issues and that allow for equitable and accessible opportunities to participate for all members of the community;
- provide credibility and authenticity to consultation processes by ensuring those who participated are informed of the outcome and where possible how their contribution effected the final decision;
- ensure staff understand and effectively implement the Community Consultation Policy;
- regularly review the Community Consultation Policy to ensure that it remains in line with best practice methods and principles that continues to meet the changing needs of Council and the Ku-ring-gai community.

Scope

This policy applies to all Ku-ring-gai Councillors, employees of Council and external consultants employed as representatives of Council who organise or convene community consultation activities. Council will apply this policy to all projects and activities where it makes decisions that will potentially interest or impact the community or where a significant policy development or change occurs.

Responsibilities

The Elected Council is responsible for:

- Giving due consideration to community feedback captured through consultation when ,deciding on matters that may be of specific interest, or have a significant immediate or long-term impact on the community
- Supporting - through agreement and approval of budgets - and encouraging the application of best practice community consultation and where appropriate participating in community engagement activities

General Manager and Directors are response for

- ensuring that this Policy is properly implemented and applied across all Divisions of Council

Directors/Department Managers/Supervisors are responsible for:

- Applying this policy to sure that community consultation undertaken at a level appropriate with the project impact
- Maintaining an appropriate level of involvement in the engagement process

Project Coordinators/Contractors are responsible for:

- Liaising with the Community and Business Engagement Coordinator to identify and plan appropriate methods/techniques, timing and stakeholder groups
- Maintaining an appropriate level of community involvement in the decision making process
- Ensuring adequate feedback regarding consultation outputs is provided to all participants and where appropriate, to the wider community
- To evaluate project processes and outcomes to ensure continuous improvement

Community and Business Engagement Coordinator is responsible for:

- Providing ongoing support and advice to staff/contractors in planning and undertaking methods of engagement
- Ensuring Council's *Community Engagement Policy* is regularly reviewed and meets best practice standards in local government
- Identifying training needs and development opportunities for staff in engagement

Manager Corporate Communications is responsible for:

- Ensuring compliance with this policy across all divisions of Council
- Ensuring Council's *Community Engagement Policy* is regularly reviewed and meets best practice standards in local government

Policy Statement

Benefits of Effective Community Consultation

Effective Community Consultation:

- **Enables** council to deliver projects, programs and services to its community more effectively
- **Assists** council to access the rich and diverse knowledge and opinions of the Ku-ring-gai community to ensure decisions to meet all community stakeholder needs are robust and informed

Effective community consultation is mutually beneficial for both the community and council:

- The **community benefits** by contributing their local and general knowledge, experience, skills and opinions to project and program development.
- The **council benefits** by capturing this information whilst having the opportunity to seek feedback and test concepts and ideas with local people.

Effective consultation also creates opportunities to build, demonstrate and foster mutual respect and trust between Council and the community.

Ku-ring-gai Council's commitment to effective community consultation and engagement recognises the important connection between elected representatives, staff and the community and potential benefits derived by using these to make better decisions. This approach is in line with the increased use of participatory democracy techniques by leading international, Federal, State and local government agencies.

Ku-ring-gai Council actively seeks the involvement and input of all sectors of the community to decision making. These sectors include residents, interest groups, businesses, commercial property owners and others. Council needs to employ a diverse range of consultation and engagement techniques to ensure community consultation and engagement remains equitable, accessible and appropriate. These techniques must take into account the needs and motivations of relevant stakeholders to and act on these to produce better, more accurate and representative outputs to inform Council decision-making

Council recognises that consultation does not finish once a community member has submitted a comment or response. Council is committed to taking appropriate steps to inform consultation participants of the outcome of the project and where appropriate, telling them how their input affected Councils decision making. This process of 'closing the engagement loop' will provide credibility, transparency and authenticity to the engagement process, encouraging community members to have a say on Council projects in the future.

Confidentiality, reliability and respect for privacy are at the forefront of all consultation practices in order to uphold Council's reputation and ensure community confidence and trust. This guides what information can be reported, how it is reported and to whom it is reported.

Genuine engagement with the community underpins sustainable decision-making. Sustainable decisions are technically feasible, economically viable (now and in the future), environmentally compatible, and publicly acceptable (within legal and legislative frameworks). A commitment to continuous improvement in this area helps to ensure that decisions reflect the needs and aspirations of both present and future generations.

One of the outcomes of this policy is to build the 'social capital' of the community. Bringing the community together to jointly share in the responsibilities of decision-making can translate to an increased level of trust in public administration and help clarify Council's levels of responsibility.

Principles

In practice, Council is committed to robust and transparent consultation practices, where all affected community stakeholders have an opportunity to participate. Two key principles underpin this approach:

1. NSW Social Justice Principles

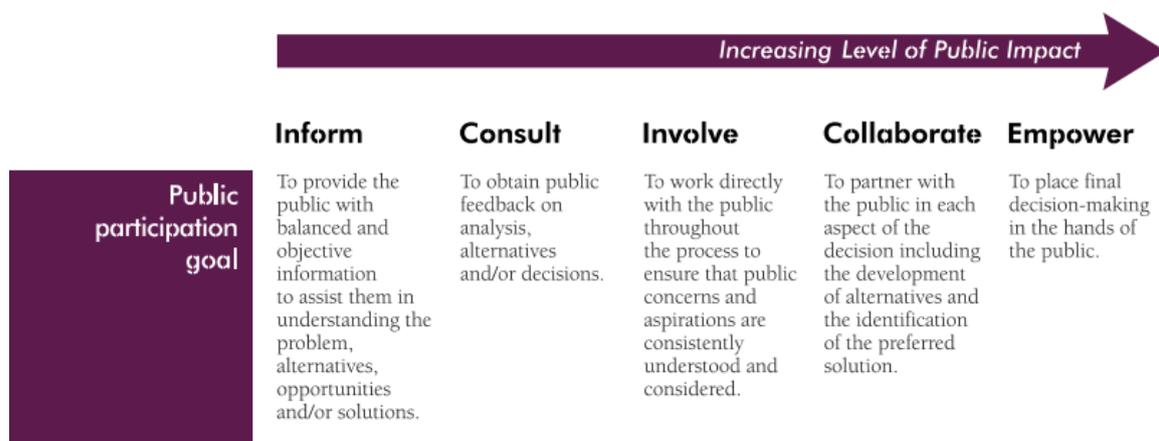
- **Equity** - There is fairness in decision making and prioritising and allocation of resources.
- **Access** – All people have fair access to services, resources and opportunities to meet their basic needs and improve their quality of life.
- **Participation** – Everyone has the maximum opportunity to genuinely participate in decisions that affect their lives.
- **Rights** – Everyone’s rights are recognised and promoted.

2. International Association of Public Participation (IAP2) spectrum

The International Association of Public Participation (IAP2) spectrum illustrates that a variety of engagement techniques will reflect the IAP2 spectrum including:

- **Inform** We will keep you informed.
- **Consult** We will keep you informed, listen to and acknowledge concerns and provide feedback on how public input influenced the decision.
- **Involve** We will work with you to ensure that your concerns and aspirations are directly reflected in the alternatives developed and provide feedback on how public input influenced the decision.
- **Collaborate** We will look to you for direct advice and innovation in formulating solutions and incorporate your advice and recommendations into the decisions to the maximum extent possible.

IAP2 Spectrum of Public Participation



Definitions

Term / Abbreviation	Definition
Community	Means residents, business owners, employees and visitors to and within Ku-ring-gai Local Government Area
Consultation	Refers to the act of consulting or conferring; deliberation of two or more person on some matter with a view to a decision.
Participatory democracy	Individual participation by citizens in political decisions and policies that affect their lives, especially directly rather than through elected representatives.