

2012/13

**Community Engagement Strategy
for the Community Strategic Plan,
Delivery Program, Operational
Plan and Resourcing Strategy**

Background

The NSW Division of Local Government (DLG), Department of Premier and Cabinet, introduced a new planning and reporting framework for local government in 2009. The new framework replaced the former annual Management Plan and Social Plan with a suite of integrated plans including the Community Strategic Plan (CSP).

The aim of a CSP is to provide clear strategic direction for the long term, and identify the main priorities, aspirations and future vision of Ballina Shire. The CSP encourages Council to draw together all plans and strategies into one meaningful document. The CSP also considers the Department of Premier and Cabinet's State Plan and other relevant state and regional plans.

While the CSP provides a way of expressing long term community aspirations, these will not be achieved without sufficient resources such as time, money, assets and people to carry them out. Some things will clearly be the responsibility of Council, some will be the responsibility of other levels of government, and some will rely on community groups.

The four year Delivery Program is a practical statement of how Council aims to achieve the strategies established by the CSP. The annual Operational Plan specifies the individual projects and activities that will be undertaken for the year to achieve the commitments made in the Delivery Program.

This information is also supported by a Resourcing Strategy which consists of a Long Term Financial Plan, a Workforce Strategy and Asset Management Plan.

Primary function of an engagement strategy

A Community Engagement Strategy is a key component in meeting Council's legislative requirements under the Integrated Planning and Reporting framework. This engagement strategy:

1. Outlines how Council will build from past consultation and knowledge and share this information with the community
2. Explains how Council will engage with the community on key issues and use the findings to develop Council's CSP and associated plans and programs
3. Demonstrates how Council will engage with the community in reviewing the draft ten year CSP and associated plans and programs.

Engagement Phases

Phase 1: Community Engagement – Information gathering and CSP Plan review

Start: August 2012 – January 2013

Phase 2: Public Exhibition - Draft Community Strategic Plan

Start: January – March 2013

Phase 3: Public Exhibition - Draft Delivery Program, Operational Plan and Resourcing Strategy

Start: April – June 2013

Past community and stakeholder engagement

Over the past four years, Council has consulted the community on a range of issues and has received a significant amount of valued community feedback and input. Community groups consulted have been numerous and varied reflecting the diversity and interests of the community.

Prior engagement has been recognised through the Community Satisfaction Survey process ongoing since 2008, Committees, Reference Groups and consultation for the development of Council strategies, plans and policies.

Stepping stones to a new plan

The development of the first CSP assisted Ballina Shire Council and the community to engage in discussions about funding priorities, service levels, preserving local identity and to plan in partnership for a more sustainable future. The development of the new CSP allows Council and the community to review information to ensure it is relevant, up to date, and representative of the whole community.

The development of the new CSP and associated plans will follow the processes outlined below to ensure adequate consultation and consideration is given to the formulation of the new suite of documents.

Step 1 Engagement Phase 1 - Review of past community consultation, strategies, plans and policies.

Engagement Phase

Step 2 Completion of the 2012 Community Survey consisting of feedback on priorities and service levels from 500 local residents.

Step 3 Youth forum to provide information on items of interest from local youth.

Step 4 Two focus group sessions to analyse further information sourced from the 2012 Community Survey.

Step 5 Councillor workshops to examine options and priorities for the Council term

Step 6 Visioning exercise to engage the community on the preferred vision for the Ballina Shire through the Community Connect magazine and internal staff survey.

Step 7 Development of the Draft Community Strategic Plan based on prior engagement and the engagement outcomes from steps 2 to 6.

Step 8 Engagement Phase 2 - Public Exhibition of the Draft Community Strategic Plan, including direct correspondence to a wide range of interest groups.

Step 9 - Assessment of community consultation and adoption of the Draft Community Strategic Plan.

Step 10 Development of a Delivery Program and Operational Plan based on supportive resourcing strategies and CSP consultation.

Step 11 Engagement Phase 3 - Public Exhibition of the Draft Delivery Program and Operational Plan.

Step 12 Assessment of community consultation and adoption of the Draft Delivery Program and Operational Plan.

Step 13 Submission to the Division of Local Government by 1 July 2013.

Social justice principles underpinning the CSP

The development of Ballina Shire Council's CSP responds to the principles of democratic representation and social inclusion expressed in the Act and guides Council to engage across a representative spectrum of socio-culturally diverse community members.

These principles inform the way in which the community will be consulted. The processes to be used will the community an opportunity to participate and have their say in Ballina Shire's future.

The principles of social justice are:

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 which affect their lives.

Rights – Everyone's rights are recognised and promoted.

Challenges

A number of potential challenges surround the project. Primary among these includes:

Consultation fatigue

The community has been consulted on numerous policies, strategies and plans over the past few years. Examples include:

1. Two public exhibitions of the Local Environmental Plan
2. Significant consultant for major planning proposals including Cumbalum Precincts A and B and the Stewart Farm
3. Extensive consultation on preferred options for the Coastal Shared Path and Recreational Walk
4. On-going consultation by the NSW State Government in respect to planning and local government reforms

Feedback on these consultation processes will be considered as part of the Community Strategic Plan.

Meeting engagement objectives

Inform the community and stakeholders (that is target audiences) of the opportunities to participate in the development of the Community Strategic Plan and associated plans and programs.

Educate the community and stakeholders about the potential issues that may impact Ballina Shire over the next 10 years. Obtain input into a 10 year vision for the Shire including future priorities, needs and aspirations. Engage with a broad cross section of the community that is representative and inclusive of the Shire's demographics. Create collaborate partnerships with government agencies to ensure goals and strategies are inclusive of existing state and regional plans. Provide positive communication by increasing awareness, understanding, trust and support of the development of Community Strategic Plan.

Evaluation – key performance indicators

Council will measure the success of the process by:

1. Level of community involvement and feedback on the draft CSP and associated plans
2. Demographic representation from throughout the Shire.

Stakeholders and target audiences

External

Rate paying and non-rate paying residents
Relevant regional organisations
Business groups
Community organisations, clubs and groups
State agencies relevant to the State Plan and neighbouring councils

Internal

Staff
Relevant council committees and working groups
Mayor and Councillors

Implementation

This engagement strategy aims to:

- To enable the community and stakeholders to participate in the decision making process
- To better understand and meet the needs of the community
- To tap into local knowledge and expertise
- To have a more informed community
- Provide positive communication by increasing awareness, understanding, trust and support for the development of council plans and programs
- To meet requirements of legislation, policies, procedures

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At various stages of the Community Strategic Plan and other plan and program development, different engagement techniques will reflect the International Association of Public Participation (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.



It is anticipated that by using different techniques Council will be able to connect with the broader community and in particular to access 'hard to reach' groups and the perceived 'silent majority'. A concerted effort will be made to reach people who would otherwise not attend public meetings or other forms of traditional consultation.

A specific list of the type of engagement activity to be used by council at the various stages of engagement is provided in the Community Engagement Toolbox table.

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Phases of Engagement

1 Information gathering and Community Strategic Plan review

Activity	IAP2	Objective	When	Who
Reach stakeholders with key messages	Inform	To inform all stakeholders about IPR and identify opportunities with partners, particularly state agencies	September 2012 – March 2013	All Staff Councillors
Vision/strategic direction – Have we got it right?	Inform and consult	To test assumptions made in the decision making process for the first CSP and confirm a vision, objectives and strategies for the new Gain additional information regarding values and aspirations relating to the focus areas	November – December 2012	All Government agencies and related groups Staff Councillors
Community expectations - goal setting	Involve and collaborate	To understand the community's priorities and gather information about what the community wants to inform the resourcing strategy	August 2012 - January 2013	Diverse group of community and business members Councillors Government agencies and related groups Staff
Feedback on the information gathered	Inform	To demonstrate that the Council listened to the community's input by incorporating feedback into the review of the plan	February 2013	All Staff Councillors

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2 Community Strategic Plan

Activity	IAP2	Objective	When	Who
Report the outcomes of discussion paper engagement and develop a new plan	Inform	To inform the community and Council about the new community strategic plan and the review process	December 2012 / January 2013	All Staff Councillors
Exhibition of Draft Community Strategic Plan	Consult	To gain a high level of confidence in the strategic direction so Council can further progress the development of the delivery program and operation plan	February – March 2013	All Staff Councillors Government Agencies Interest Groups Ward Committees
Council's response to feedback on Draft Community Strategic Plan	Inform	To inform all stakeholders about Council's response to feedback on the draft community strategic plan	March 2013	All Staff Councillors

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3 Delivery Program and Operation Plan

Activity	IAP2	Objective	When	Who
Community priorities and service level expectations	Involve and collaborate	To understand the community's satisfaction level with the current service levels provided by council To understand the community's preferences/priorities for key services provided by council	August 2012 – March 2013	Diverse groups of residents, youth community and business Councillors Government agencies and related groups Staff
Introduce the delivery program and operational plan to the community Explain the concepts of long term financial sustainability	Inform	To inform all stakeholders about what the delivery program and operation plan do and how they fit into IPR To inform the community of the gap between funds required and funds spent on asset maintenance	March – April 2013	All Staff Councillors
Exhibition of draft delivery program and operation plan	Consult	To present the response to the community input into the DOP and OP To meet legislative requirements To provide an opportunity for community to make enquires and provide feedback	April – June 2013	All Staff Councillors
Council's response to feedback on draft delivery program and operation plan	Inform	To confirm what the final DP OP will be based on	June 2013	All Staff Councillors

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Community Engagement Toolbox

INFORM	CONSULT	INVOLVE	COLLABORATE
Regular media releases	Community surveys	Councillor workshops	Focus groups
Display advertising/Radio advertising	Media promotion inviting submissions	Council committees	Councillor workshops
Regular notices in public notices	On line consultation	Presentation to business and community groups	
Community Connect and rate notice inserts	Community information stalls	Roundtable discussions with agencies and peak groups	
Web site	Open days and one on one interviews	Conversations with community (young, old, diverse)	
Fact sheets	Formal exhibition of Plans	Formal exhibition of Plans	
Online newsletter	Engage with regional and state agencies	Online interactive forums, blogs and surveys	
Include a message for Council's on hold answering machines		Social media	
Media briefings			
Links to 3rd party social networks on the development of the CSP to be requested			
Static displays and roving events			
Information brochure			
In person meetings			
Councillor workshops			