

## PUBLIC CONSULTATION POLICY

First Approved	July 2011
Status	Mandatory
Review Frequency	Biennial or as required
Last Reviewed	Jan 2015
Next Review Due	Jan 2017
File Number	18.63.001/PC20151
Responsible Division	Organisation & Culture
Related Documents	<a href="#">Public Consultation Procedure</a> <a href="#">Alexandrina Council Community Strategic Plan 2014 – 2023</a> <a href="#">LGA Public Consultation Guidelines</a> <a href="#">LGA Community Engagement Handbook</a> <a href="#">LGMA Reinforcing Local Government Report</a>
Applicable Legislation	Local Government Act 1999 Section 50 Local Government Act 1999 Chapter 4, part 5

### Definitions

In this Policy, unless the contrary intention appears, these words have the following meaning:

“*Communication*” is the one-way provision of information by a council representative to stakeholders (internal or external). Communication includes but is not limited to, advertisements, letters, newsletters, brochures, phone calls, door knocks, signs, displays, drawings and models.

“*Consultation*” is the two-way provision of information by a council representative to stakeholders (internal or external) that enables them to respond, expressing concerns and identifying issues, so these can be considered before making a final decision. Consultation includes, but is not limited to, discussion, written submissions, surveys, group meetings, workshops, displays, public events, and formal advisory committees. Consultation provides opportunities to clarify information, raise issues and discuss ideas and options.

“*Consultation Advisory Group*” comprises the Chief Executive or nominated representative, Elected Member nominated by Council, relevant General Manager or nominated representative, Council staff responsible for administrative requirements and venue arrangements.

### Preamble

The contents of and the commitments that Council make in this policy are not intended to be and should not be interpreted to be any more than a statement of the Council’s general position in relation to those matters, and to facilitate its aspirations wherever it is reasonable to do so.

### Overview

Alexandrina Council is committed to open, accountable and responsive decision making, which is informed by effective communication and consultation between Council and the community. This Policy sets out the steps Council will take to establish partnerships and encourage community involvement in planning and decision making regarding the services Council provides and the management of community resources.

Council aims to ensure that appropriate and cost effective methods are used to inform and involve the local community, key stakeholders and interested parties relevant to the specific circumstances of each consultation topic. Council recognises the community expectation of good governance through greater transparency and accountability. These principles are embodied in this policy and Council’s strategic planning framework.

This Policy addresses the key elements of both communication and consultation.

## **Purpose**

The objective of this public consultation policy is to engage citizens, community groups, organisations and businesses in the council's problem solving, planning and decision making at both council and staff levels. Public consultation processes aim to:

- inform citizens, groups and organisations about specific decisions likely to affect them
- ensure all views are considered in planning and decision making
- create joint visions that speak to multiple interests and concerns
- initiate action to resolve issues and problems.

Overall, the public consultation policy aims to inspire people, groups and organisations to take an active role in caring for and enriching the Alexandrina Council community. This builds the longer term capacity of the council and its citizens to work together for a healthier, safer and more vibrant community. Further objectives of the public consultation process are to:

- communicate the interests and meets the process needs of the participants
- seek out and facilitates the involvement of those potentially affected
- involve participants in defining how they participate
- communicate to participants how their input affected the decision
- provide participants with the information they need to participate in a meaningful way
- increase public confidence in local government and its management of local resources
- provide a continuing partnership between council and the community.

## **Policy Principles**

Some key principles of this policy include:

- Those affected by a development proposal, project or substantive issue have the right to be informed and have the opportunity to participate
- The consultation program should be interesting, equitable, inclusive and adequately resourced
- Consultation should commence early and be part of the assessment process rather than being a one off event
- The history of a previous consultation programs should be taken into account
- The purpose, expected outcomes and decision making process should be clearly communicated to all parties participating
- Diverse consultation techniques should be implemented to maximise opportunity for participation and flexibility regarding the choice of an appropriate consultation technique
- Consultation objectives should be matched with appropriate techniques
- The consultation policy should be constantly evaluated against its objectives and modified accordingly to meet changing needs
- Participants should be provided feedback as part of the decision process.

**Consultation**

Council will determine on a case by case basis at the time of its resolution whether consultation is required.

**Delegations**

Council acknowledges that the Chief Executive may sub-delegate matters related to this Policy to staff or other persons employed or engaged by council.

**Documentation**

To assist in demonstrating that Public Consultation processes are fair, transparent and accountable, cost effective and meet community needs, we will document all Consultation processes.

**Availability of Policy**

This Policy will be available for inspection at the Council's offices during normal business hours and on the Council's website [www.alexandrina.sa.gov.au](http://www.alexandrina.sa.gov.au). Copies will also be provided to interested members of the community upon payment of a fee in accordance with Council's Schedule of Fees and Charges.