Community Engagement Strategy

bega valley
shire council

INFORM
CONSULT
INVOLVE
COLLABORATE
EMPOWER

Acknowledgment

The Bega Valley Shire Council acknowledges the traditional custodians of the lands and waters of the Shire, the people of the Yuin Nation, and shows our respect to elders past, present and emerging.

Message from our Mayor

Welcome to the Bega Valley Shire Community Engagement Strategy. This Strategy reflects Council's commitment to encourage open and transparent relationships between Council and the community. Through effective engagement, we can work together to achieve the best outcomes for the broader community.

Bega Valley Shire Council is committed to working with the people of Bega Shire through service delivery, by planning for the future, and by embracing our adopted community vision:

> By working together, the Bega Valley Shire community integrates quality of life, enterprising business, sustainable development and conservation of the environment.

Council invites our communities to participate in the decisions and projects that shape our natural, built, economic and social environments. This Community Engagement Strategy is central to Council's community engagement framework, which aims to give the community a clear understanding of:

• Council's commitment to engaging with the community

• How we will seek and respond to community input

• The types of engagement that suit the various activities

• How community input is utilised in decision making

• How community involvement shapes our actions

This document integrates several of Council's legislative requirements. It addresses requirements under the *Local Government Act 1993*, particularly the Integrated Planning and Reporting Framework. It includes a Community Participation Plans under the *Environmental Planning and Assessment Act 1979*, and identifies how Council has incorporated the NSW Government's Community Engagement Strategy for Crown Land established under the *Crown Land Management Act, 2016*.

We would like to acknowledge the valuable contribution of stakeholders and community members across the Bega Valley Shire that took the time to meet with us to share their views and experiences on engagement. This feedback has helped guide the development of this Strategy, and will also inform our ongoing work through the continued development of our Community Engagement Toolkit and Organisational Service Charter.

Cr Kristy McBain, Mayor
Bega Valley Shire Council

Executive summary

Our commitment
To ensure that members of our community have the opportunity to actively contribute to civic life.

Our principles

- Integrity
- Clarity of purpose
- Accessible and inclusive
- Show the influence of community input
- Respectful

- Timely
- Tailored
- Informed
- Always learning
- Meet our legislative requirements

How we listen to the community
We hear from you online, through emails, phone calls, letters, petitions and project proposals.

What is engagement
Community engagement is also called "public participation" and it is about involving the community in decision-making, and is at the very core of our democratic processes in local government.

Why we engage
We engage to ensure that we understand the diversity of views across the Shire, we consider a wide range of options informed by community input and we deliver services that meet the expectations of as many people as possible.

How we engage
Council has adopted the IAP2 Public Participation framework as a methodology for determining the scope of engagement and how decisions are made. This guides us to engage depending on the scope or impact of the project to either inform, consult, involve, collaborate or empower the community in decision making.

Contents

Our commitment

This Community Engagement Strategy sets out a whole of Council commitment to community engagement. Our commitment is that:

Bega Valley Shire Council will:

- Encourage everyone with an interest in the Shire to understand, be understood and learn from each other through a productive and inclusive exchange of views

- Ensure that people receive information that is timely, free of bias and easy to access

- Be transparent, strengthen relationships and build mutual respect through ongoing engagement activities

- Be open of responsive and respectful of differing points of view

- Articulate our commitment and deliver it

We aim to ensure that people are:

- Informed about issues and decisions that could affect their current or future way of life

- Encouraged to share their views with Council

- Able to raise issues and have their say in a way and at a time that suits them

- Be involved in decision making processes if they wish to be

- Confident their views and feedback have been considered

- Able to get feedback on how their input has been reflected in Council decisions and actions

Our principles

Bega Valley Shire Council's approach to community engagement is guided by the following principles:

- **Integrity:** our engagement will be genuine, meaningful and transparent

- **Clarity of purpose:** we will be clear about the purpose of the engagement and how contributions will be considered

- **Accessible and Inclusive:** our engagement will be accessible and balanced, capturing a range of values and perspectives by applying a variety of engagement methods that suit the purpose of engagement and the stakeholders involved

- **Influence:** our engagement activities are reflected in our outcomes. The community should be able to see and understand the impact of their involvement, with feedback available about the outcomes of engagement and how and why decisions were taken

- **Respectful:** we will act in an honest, open and respectful way to build strong relationships, partnerships and trust with our stakeholders

- **Timely:** we engage early and provide enough time for stakeholders to provide input

- **Tailored:** We actively seek to identify and engage with those likely to have an interest in the issues involved using appropriate methods

- **Informed:** we utilise existing research and findings of other consultations that Council or other organisations have conducted

- **Learning from practice:** we regularly review and update Council's engagement techniques to learn and improve

- **Meeting legislative requirements:** we will meet or exceed all statutory engagement requirements

How we listen

Community engagement goes beyond Council asking for feedback. We welcome input from people on issues that affect them. The tools we use to listen are part of our Community Engagement Toolkit that are used for gathering the community's input on Council activity. All of these processes have a commitment from us to respond in a timely manner as described in the Council Organisational Service Standards policy.

Engagement method	How to contact Council	What happens next?
Have Your Say	The Have Your Say section of the Council website is always open. You can either leave your comments on a specific project or development application that is open for comment.	All feedback from the Have Your Say pages are collated into reports that are then presented to the Council.
Suggestion Box	Available on the website. You can fill out the form and it gets sent directly to us.	The Suggestion Box submissions are directed to the appropriate functional area within Council for actioning.
Snap Send Solve	Is an app for your phone for you to report something directly affecting the area where you live.	The Snap Send Solve submissions are directed to the appropriate functional area within Council for actioning.
Petitions	Anyone can submit a petition to Council for consideration. Petitions immediately demonstrate a level of interest from the community on a specific topic. There is a How to Lodge a Petition with Council information page on the website. Please note that petitions need to be in the correct format.	After a petition has been submitted it will be tabled at Council or a Councillor may provide a notice of motion to accompany the petition.
Public Forums and Presentations	There are two ways you can seek to arrange to address the Council: 1. A request to speak at a Public Forum about a matter that has been included in the Agenda for a Council meeting 2. A request to make a Presentation to the Councillors about activities or items of community interest	Once you have presented in either a Public Forum or as a Presentation to the Council, the Council may then either make a notice of motion or a recommendation to Council staff to act on the resolution.

How we listen

Engagement method	How to contact to Council	What happens next?
Letters and emails	All letters and emails sent to Council are documented and then forwarded to the appropriate officer for action. You can write to Bega Valley Shire Council PO Box 492, Bega NSW 2550 or email Council@begavalley.nsw.gov.au	Once written correspondence has been received it is allocated to a Council officer or area with a time-frame set for response.
Community projects	Do you have an idea for a project in your community? Council has a dedicated Community Projects Proposal process to consider community projects. You can also contact areas and officers of Council to talk about your idea. Start by ringing 6499 2222 to be directed to someone to talk to.	Your Project Proposal is submitted to Council for consideration. If your project recieves inkind support Council will start by creating a Project Plan for the next steps.
Phone calls	Ring 6499 2222 anytime. This number is monitored 24 hours a day so if there is an emergency or you see a Council asset in need of attention just ring through. Customer service is open from 9.00am - 4.30pm Mon - Fri.	All phone calls are centrally logged using our customer request management (CRM) system and then sent to the appropriate section or officer for action.
In person	Visit our customer service centre in Bega open from 9.00am - 4.30pm Mon - Fri.	All enquiries taken over the front desk are centrally logged using our CRM system and then sent to the appropriate section or officer for action.

What is engagement?

Community engagement is about involving the community in decision-making, and is at the very core of our democratic processes in local government.

Through community engagement, Council aims to understand varied points of view, clarify community expectations, and build trust. Meaningful engagement allows Council to gather information which enhances decision making and service delivery. Engagement is more than the provision of information. It is an ongoing process which involves two-way communication process, talking and listening, and shared decision making.

This Strategy references a continuum of community engagement, based on the International Association of the Public Participation (IAP2) spectrum, - *inform, consult, involve, collaborate and empower*.

The IAP2 Spectrum of Public Participation

The IAP2 Public Participation framework is a methodology for determining the scope of engagement and level of influence the community has in decision making.

The IAP2 Spectrum of Public Participation (Figure 1) outlines a continuum of participation that may be appropriate, depending on the outcomes, time-frames, resources and levels of public concern in the decision to be made. At each participation level a different type of commitment is made to the community, which should be made clear and upheld.

By using the IAP2 framework to guide our engagement processes, Council recognises that there is a continuum of engagement that may be applied in different circumstances. For example, if a Council is not actively seeking community input because a decision has already been made, inform is the most appropriate engagement approach.

If, however, Council is seeking to gain further understanding of a matter, and community views, Council will consult or involve people. At the empowerment end of the spectrum, decisions are made by local people without Council involvement An example of this is formal committees of Council, such as Hall Committees, who have a delegated authority to make certain decisions on behalf of Council.
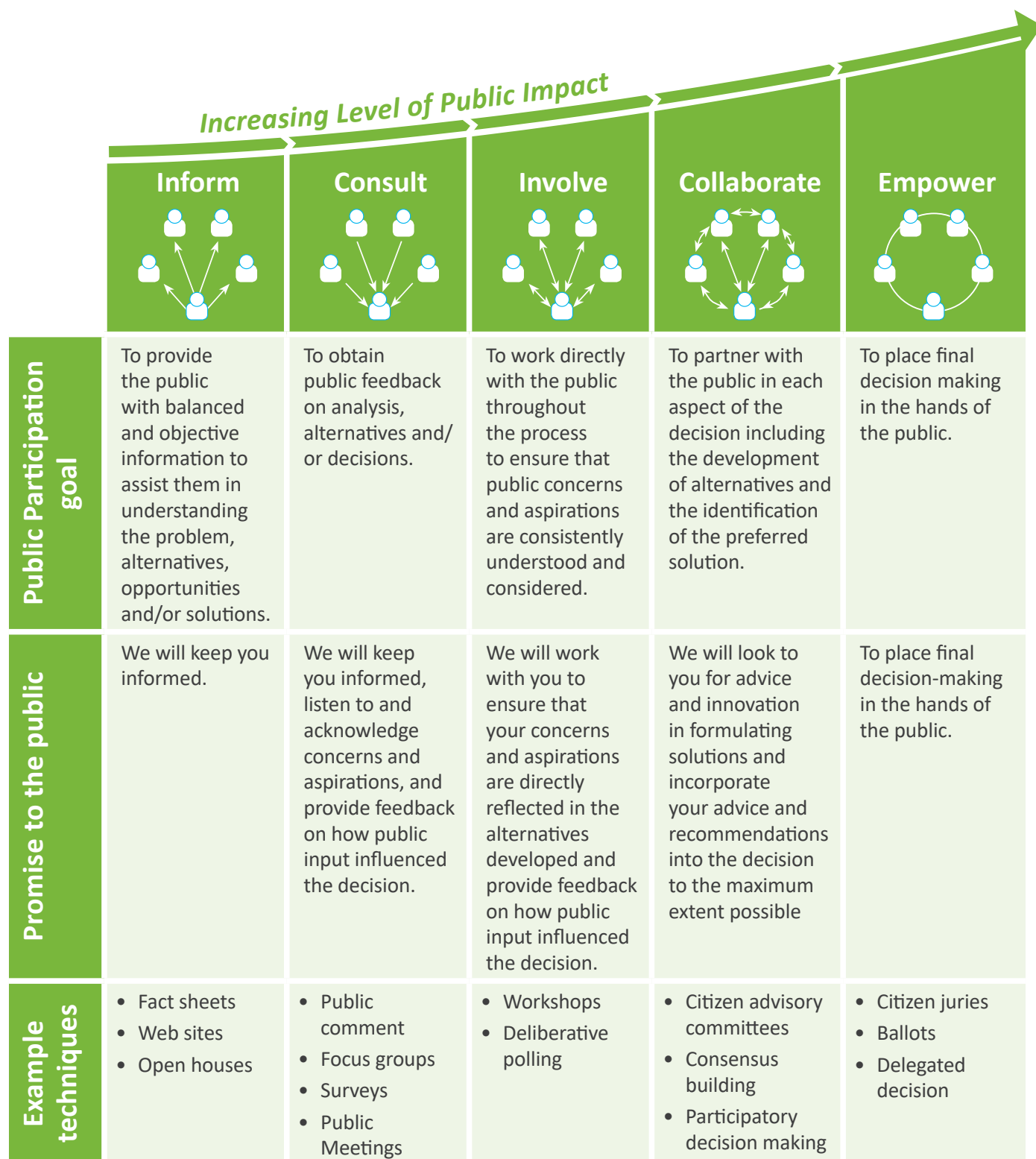
	Inform	Consult	Involve	Collaborate	Empower
Public Participation goal	To provide the public with balanced and objective information to assist them in understanding the problem, alternatives, opportunities and/or solutions.	To obtain public feedback on analysis, alternatives and/or decisions.	To work directly with the public throughout the process to ensure that public concerns and aspirations are consistently understood and considered.	To partner with the public in each aspect of the decision including the development of alternatives and the identification of the preferred solution.	To place final decision making in the hands of the public.
Promise to the public	We will keep you informed.	We will keep you informed, listen to and acknowledge concerns and aspirations, and provide feedback on how public input influenced the decision.	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.	We will look to you for advice and innovation in formulating solutions and incorporate your advice and recommendations into the decision to the maximum extent possible	To place final decision-making in the hands of the public.
Example techniques	• Fact sheets • Web sites • Open houses	• Public comment • Focus groups • Surveys • Public Meetings	• Workshops • Deliberative polling	• Citizen advisory committees • Consensus building • Participatory decision making	• Citizen juries • Ballots • Delegated decision

Figure 1 - IAP2 public participation spectrum

Why we engage

Council knows that people living in the Bega Valley Shire value participation, having a voice and being involved. Engaging with our communities helps us to:

- Make better decisions

- Ensure our current services, projects and directions align with community priorities

- Plan for future services, projects and directions by identifying and understanding what is important to our communities and their aspirations

- Ensure that services best meet the needs of our diverse community including cultural, social and accessibility considerations

- Encourage a range of voices to be heard

- Identify shared values, benefits and outcomes and how Council and community can work together to realise our goals

- Manage risks by understanding and anticipating issues before they escalate

- Ensure legislative requirements are met

How we engage

In line with the IAP2 spectrum of engagement, it is important for Council to determine which level of engagement is appropriate; inform, consult, involve, collaborate or empower. To guide these decisions, we have developed a set of engagement criteria.

Our engagement criteria (Tables 1 & 2) consider the community scale of a project and its impact. These criteria inform Council's Community Engagement Toolkit, which is utilised to plan and implement all engagement activities. Throughout the life of a project, different levels of engagement may occur, and these levels will be considered in the planning of projects.

Our engagement criteria

Table 1 - Community scale levels	
Activity	**Community level**
The greater majority or entire Bega Valley population affected Relevant to a large geographical area of the Bega Valley High complexity including numerous stakeholders and community groups	High
A significant proportion of the Bega Valley population affected Relevant to a locality, town or village or a large specific group or user of a facility or service Moderate complexity including multiple stakeholders and community groups	Moderate
A small component of the Bega Valley population affected Relevant to a street, suburb, village or small specific group or users of a facility or service Low complexity including only several stakeholders and community groups	Low

Table 2 - Community impact levels	
Activity	**Community impact**
Potential for high risk of controversy or conflict with Bega Valley community values Significant impacts to attributes, such as natural environment, water supply, land use or heritage Potential large impact on government strategies and directions Any potential culturally sensitive impact on Aboriginal cultural heritage	High
Potential for some risk of controversy or conflict with local community values The loss or change to any facility or service to the locality Potential moderate impact on government strategies and directions	Moderate
Low or no risk of controversy or conflict with local community values A small change to any facility or service to the locality Low impact on government strategies and directions	Low

Level of engagement

The matrix below (Figure 2) outlines the general engagement expectations for activity undertaken by Council, as determined by the scale and impact criteria in Tables 1 & 2.
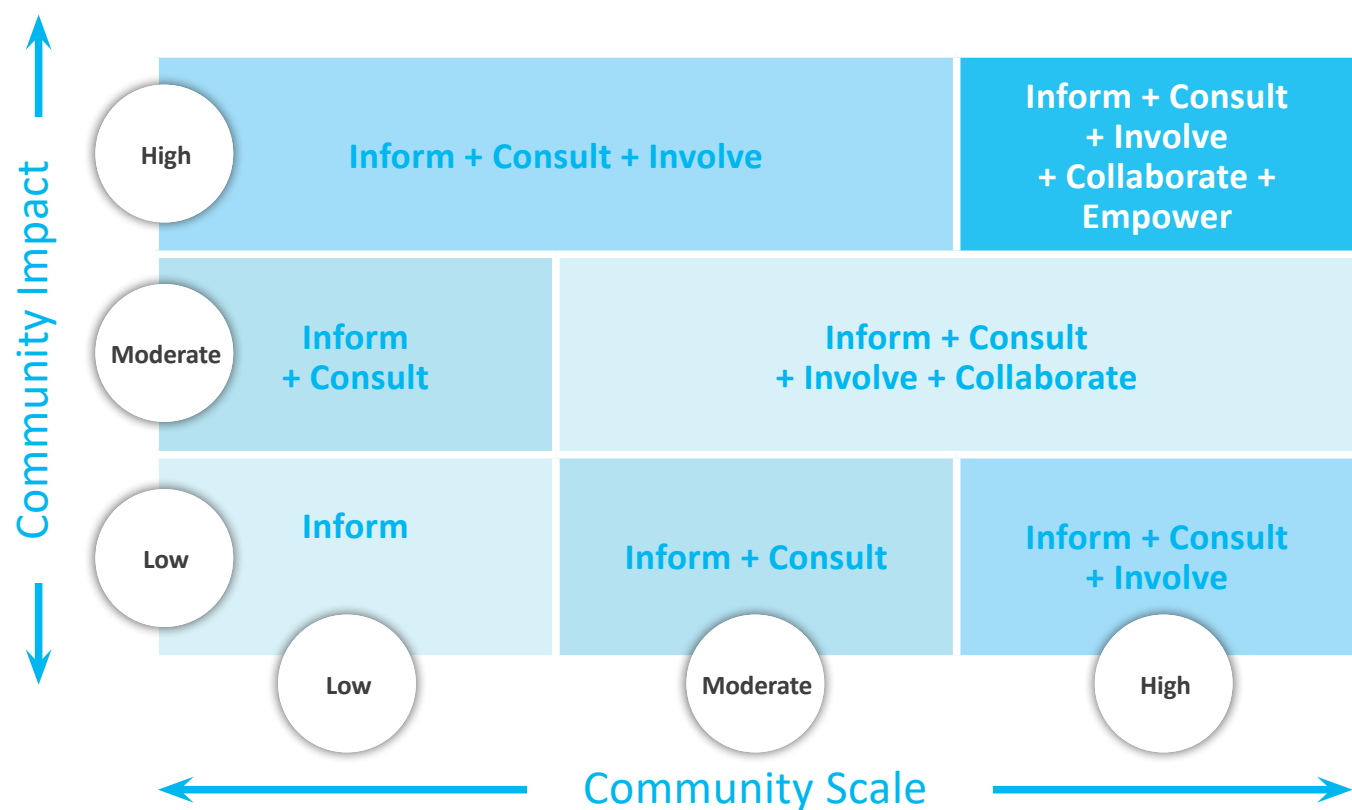

Figure 2 - Application of IAP2 spectrum relative to scale and impact of activity (adapted from Tweed Shire Council Community Engagement Strategy)

Our engagement methods and techniques

In developing project plans for any community engagement activity, our staff are guided by our supporting document, the Community Engagement Toolkit.   As a summary, Table 3 provides methods and techniques that may be applied for the varying levels of engagement.

Table 3 - Example engagement methods		
Level of engagement	**Examples of methods and techniques that may be used by Council**	**Decision maker**
Inform To provide information about the problem or project to be addressed	• Council News (hard copy & electronic) • E-news • Direct Mail/Letterbox Drop • Council Customer Contact Centre • Publications to promote Council specific programs, services and initiatives • Council website and social media • Email subscriptions including Library E-news • Council agendas and minutes • Media releases and traditional advertising • Site signage - permanent or temporary • Community Noticeboards • Noticeboards in the Libraries • Petitions • Snap Send Solve • Presentations to Council • Website Suggestions Box	Council
Consult To seek an opinion or input to inform a decision	• Public exhibitions • Councillors in the Community sessions • Council listening posts • Council 'Have your Say' page • Surveys • Community conversations	Council
Involve To engage with stakeholders to understand and consider their input and feedback	• Community discussion groups (focus groups) • Project reference groups • Stakeholder forums	Council

Table 3 - Example engagement methods		
Level of engagement	**Examples of methods and techniques that may be used by Council**	**Decision maker**
Collaborate To work in partnership to come to a decision	• Committees of Council • Advisory groups • Community Project Proposals	Council and Community
Empower To give the decision-making role entirely to the stakeholders	• Polls or referendums • Local government elections • Deliberative democracy models • Community projects and programs	Community

Tailoring our engagement methods

Before Council enters into any engagement activity, a community engagement plan will be developed, guided by our Community Engagement Toolkit. By applying our principles to individual community engagement plans, we will ensure that key stakeholders are identified and that we tailor our techniques and methods appropriately. In doing so, we aim to ensure that all our engagement activities are culturally appropriate and respect the diversity of our community.

In particular, we acknowledge that fostering a culture of trust, respect and cultural awareness is key to effective engagement with Aboriginal communities. Our Aboriginal Protocols and Guidelines describe how we will work with local Aboriginal people.

This guidance will inform our approach to seeking input from the diversity of views within our local Aboriginal communities to ensure our engagement processes are inclusive.

Committees of Council provide an important opportunity for people with skills, knowledge and lived experience to engage in Council decision making processes. Committees of Council will be utilised to enhance community engagement with specific stakeholder groups. Council has a number of formal committees, established under section 355 of the *Local Government Act, 1993*, including:

- Access and Inclusion Advisory Committee
- Bega, Eden and Merrimans (BEM) Aboriginal Liaison Committee
- General Cemetery Committee
- General Halls and Building Committee
- General Sportsground Committee
- Internal Audit Risk and Improvement Committee

How our strategy meets our international and legislative obligations

UN Sustainable Development Goals

Alignment with the UN Sustainable Development Goals The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) (Figure 10), also known as the Global Goals, were adopted by all United Nations Member States in 2015 as a universal call to action to end poverty, protect the planet and ensure that all people enjoy peace and prosperity by 2030. Australia is committed to the SDGs as a universal, global approach.

This strategy aligns with two of the goals:

SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOAL 11 - Make cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable.

SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOAL 16 - Promote peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development, provide access to justice for all and build effective, accountable and inclusive institutions at all levels.

Community participation on planning matters

This Community Engagement Strategy incorporates Council's Community Participation Plan for planning matters (see pages 18-22). The Community Participation Plan is a requirement of the *Environmental Planning and Assessment Act 1979*.

Crown Land Community Engagement Strategy

When working on any Council managed Crown land issue, Council follows the time frames and guidelines established by the Crown Land Community Engagement Strategy: www.industry.nsw.gov.au/lands/public/community-engagement-strategy

This is a statutory document developed by the Lands & Water Division of the NSW Department of Planning Industry and Environment.

Its purpose is to:

- Set out procedures for community engagement that are to be followed by decision-makers when administering dealings or activities involving Crown land

- Ensure decision-makers better understand how the community is currently using and enjoying Crown land before making decisions about dealings or activities that may impact that use and enjoyment

Table 6 - Alignment with Community Participation Plan principles and Crown Land Community Engagement Strategy		
Council engagement	**Community Participation Plan Principle**	**Crown Lands Community Engagement Strategy**
Integrity: Our engagement will be genuine, meaningful and transparent.	The community should be given opportunities to participate in strategic planning as early as possible to enable community views to be genuinely considered.	
Clarity of purpose: We will be clear about the purpose of the engagement and how contributions will be considered.	Planning decisions should be made in an open and transparent way and the community should be provided with reasons for those decisions (including how community views have been considered).	**Transparent:** Engagement is conducted openly, fosters respect and trust, and is professional, honest and consistent.
Accessible and Inclusive: Our engagement will be accessible and balanced, capturing a range of values and perspectives by applying a variety of engagement methods that suit the purpose of engagement and the stakeholders involved.	Planning information should be in plain language, easily accessible and in a form that facilitates community participation in planning Community participation should be inclusive and planning authorities should actively seek views that are representative of the community.	**Accessible:** Engagement is informed by best-practice approaches and supported by activities that are accessible and easy for people to understand and use.

Table 6 - Alignment with Community Participation Plan principles and Crown Land Community Engagement Strategy		
Council engagement	**Community Participation Plan Principle**	**Crown Lands Community Engagement Strategy**
Influence: Our engagement activities should be reflected in outcomes – the community should be able to see and understand the impact of their involvement, with feedback available about the outcomes of engagement and how and why decisions were taken.		
Respectful: We will act in an honest, open and respectful way to build strong relationships, partnerships and trust with our stakeholders.	Planning Authorities should encourage effective and on-going partnerships with the community to provide meaningful opportunities for community participation in planning.	
Timely: We engage early and provide enough time for stakeholders to provide input.	Members of the community who are affected by proposed major development should be consulted by the proponent before an application for planning approval is made.	**Timely:** Activities to support engagement about Crown land dealings and activities are delivered according to this Strategy and within specified time-frames.

Table 6 - Alignment with Community Participation Plan principles and Crown Land Community Engagement Strategy		
Council engagement	**Community Participation Plan Principle**	**Crown Lands Community Engagement Strategy**
Tailored: We actively seek to identify and engage with those likely to have an interest in the issues involved using appropriate methods.	Community participation methods (and the reasons given for the planning decisions) should be appropriate having regard to the significance and likely impact of the proposed development.	**Evidence-Based:** The calculated impact on current community use and enjoyment of Crown land will determine the appropriate level of engagement. **Proportionate** Engagement is consistent, proportionate and reflects the likely impact of the dealing or activity on current community use and enjoyment.
Informed: We utilise existing research and findings of other consultations that Council or other agencies have conducted to build our consultation.		
Learning from practice: We regularly review and update Council's engagement techniques to learn and improve.		
Meeting legislative requirements: We will meet or exceed all statutory engagement requirements.	The community has a right to be informed.	

How we engage on planning matters

The Community Participation Plan is an invitation to the community to participate in the planning process at a local government level and provides guidance for how people can have a say on different types of planning matters including:

- Assessment and determination of development applications
- Planning proposals and contributions plans
- Strategic planning statements and strategies
- Voluntary planning agreements
- Development Control Plans
- Local Environmental Plans

Our Community Participation Plan

The role of exhibitions in the planning system

Opportunities to participate in the planning system vary according to the nature, scale and likely impact of the proposal being assessed or considered. A valuable way for the community to participate in the planning system is by making a submission on a proposal during an exhibition or notification period.

Exhibition and Notification

The key methods we use to encourage community participation is through formal exhibitions or notifications of development applications or plan-making processes. During an exhibition or notification process, we make available relevant documents that may include a draft of a policy, plan or report, or information about development applications that we have received.

In reaching decisions on proposals and applications that have been exhibited, Council balances a wide range of factors to ensure that decisions are in the public interest. This includes considering the objects of the *Environmental Planning and Assessment Act 1979*, NSW and regional planning directions, the strategic priorities for the Bega Valley, community views, and the land use priorities identified in strategic plans and applicable policies and guidelines.

Development applications or planning matters that are required to be placed on public exhibition or notified upon their receipt are referred to as Exhibited Development or Notified Development. Development that requires formal exhibition prior to determination is listed in Appendix A and is known as Exhibited Development. Notified Development is development that requires that one or more adjoining land owners be notified about the development before it is determined (see Appendix B).

Development excluded from exhibition or notification under this Community Participation Plan

Some types of development do not need development consent from Council or are of a minor nature with minimal likely impacts on neighbours and the environment. In these instances, there is no pathway for formal community participation. This type of development fall within the following categories:

a) Development that is exempt development under the provisions of Clause 3.1 Exempt Development of Council's Local Environmental Plan and or any applicable State Environmental Planning Policy.

b) Development that is complying development under the provisions of Clause 3.2 Complying Development of Council's Local Environmental Plan and or any applicable State Environmental Planning Policy.

c) Development not listed as Exhibited or Notified Development in Appendices A and B of this document.

Consultation channels

Council may communicate opportunities for participation in the development assessment process and strategic planning matters through any of the following methods:

- Newspaper notices in either the Bega District News, Merimbula Weekly or Eden Magnet

- Notices on the land (if required by the *Environmental Planning and Assessment Regulation 2000*)

- Letters to stakeholders

- Council's website, particularly the DA Tracker page.

For strategic planning matters, such as strategies, policies and planning proposals, Council will also provide opportunities for participation through the most appropriate methods that are relevant to the project. Methods that could be used by Council include:

- Social media posts

- Newsletter articles

- Letterbox flyer

- Council email banner

- Public displays in the civic centre, libraries, shopping centres or other community venues or events.

How does Council determine who will be notified about a development application?

Except as noted below, written notices of either exhibited or notified development applications will be given to the owners of land directly adjoining the land on which the development is intended to occur.

For the purposes of determining what is adjoining land, Council will generally exclude land which is separated by a road, pathway or other significant feature. Council may consider wider notification depending on the scale and potential impacts of the development.

Notice to the owners of adjoining land means written advice that Council has received a development application, including the time and location at which the documents may be inspected, forwarded by ordinary post to the owner of the adjoining property as identified in Council's property records at the time of lodgment of the development application.

In the case of the adjoining land being part of a strata plan, notification will be given to the Body Corporate only.

Consideration of submissions

Council is not bound to adopt a suggestion or support an objection when making its determination on a development application or other planning matter. Assessment of any application or planning proposal involves careful consideration of the merits of the proposal and assessment against all relevant planning considerations.

Development applications are usually determined by Council staff, under delegation from the elected Council. Where submissions are considered to raise issues of planning merit that cannot be addressed by conditions of consent, the application may be reported to the elected Council. The grounds for objection will be summarised in the report.

Submissions are not confidential. It is Council's policy to provide details of submissions to the public. If someone wishes for their personal details to remain confidential, they must clearly state this in writing along with the reasons; however, Council may still be obliged to release these details under the *Government Information (Public Access) Act 2009*.

Submissions that do not contain the author's name and address may not be considered, as Council will be unable to verify their authenticity.

Any person who is advised in writing of Council's receipt of their submission will receive information about Council procedures if the application is reported to Council. A submitter may request permission to address Council at a Public Forum held prior to the Council meeting at which the matter is to be considered. Details of the process to address the elected Council are provided when contacting the General Manager's Executive Assistant and are available on Council's website.

All people or groups and/or head petitioners who made a submission will be advised in writing of Council's decision after the application is determined.

Exhibition time-frames

Section 2.21(2) of the *Environmental Planning and Assessment Act 1979* details the types of proposals that for which community input is sought and Schedule 1 sets the minimum exhibition time-frame for most of these proposals. These minimum mandatory exhibition periods are set out in Table 4.

Council will always exhibit a proposal for this minimum time-frame and will consider an extended time-frame for exhibition based on the scale and nature of the proposal.

Table 4 - Minimum exhibition time frames for planning and development assessment	
Plan making activity	**Time frame**
Draft community participation plan	28 days
Planning proposals for local environmental plans subject to a gateway determination	28 days or as specified by the Gateway determination (a Department of Planning, Industry and Environment process)
Draft development control plans	28 days
Draft contribution plans (including growth centres and planned precincts)	28 days

Development assessment activity	**Time frame**
Application for development consent (other than for complying development certificate, for designated development or for State significant development)	14 days
Application for development consent for designated development	28 days
Nominated integrated development	28 days
Environmental impact statement obtained under Division 5.1	28 days

Key points to note about public exhibitions include:

- A public authority is not required to make available for public inspection any part of an environmental impact statement where publication would, in the opinion of the public authority, be contrary to the public interest because of its confidential nature or for any other reason

- Time-frames are in calendar days and include weekends

- If the exhibition period is due to close on a weekend or a public holiday, Council may extend the exhibition to finish on the first available week day

- The period between 20 December and 10 January (inclusive) is excluded from the calculation of a period of public exhibition.

Several of Council's functions and proposals do not have minimum exhibition time-frames. As a matter of course, in line with our community engagement principles, Council typically exhibits documents related to the exercise of these functions and proposals for the time-frames described in Table 5:

Table 5 - Non-mandatory exhibition time frames	
Non-mandatory minimum exhibition time-frames	
Draft legislation, regulation, policies and guidelines	28 days based on the urgency, scale and nature of the proposal
Application for modification of development consent that is required to be publicly exhibited by the regulations	Up to 14 days based on scale and nature of the proposal
Re-exhibition of any amended application or matter referred to above	Discretionary based on the urgency, scale and nature of the proposal

There may be other proposals, not subject to mandatory exhibition time-frames, that Council may choose to exhibit for at least 28 days and engage with the community in line with our community engagement principles.

Additionally, there may be some occasions where a government priority or administrative requirement demands immediate action on proposals that prevents the implementation of our usual community engagement process.

Feedback

There are many ways for the community to provide feedback or raise questions outside of formal exhibition process, and Council will always consider and respond to community views and concerns. These avenues are described in our Organisation Service Charter.

How feedback will be used

The Council decision making process

Bega Valley Shire Council is governed by nine elected Councillors. Councillors are elected to represent the interests of all ratepayers and residents. Our elected Council will ensure it effectively represents the diverse views of the Bega Valley community by adopting the principles of this strategy.

The *Local Government Act 1993* defines the following roles and responsibilities of Council, in relation to community engagement, to include:

- **Councillors** represent the collective interests of residents, ratepayers and the local community; and facilitate communication with the community

- **Elected Council** provides leadership and establishes policy and **strategic direction** for the organisation and the future of the Shire. The Council consults regularly with community organisations and other key stakeholders, and keeps them informed of its decisions

- **Mayor** as leader of the Council and as a community leader, promotes partnerships with key stakeholders, and together with the General Manager ensures adequate opportunities and mechanisms for engagement between the Council and the local community

- **General Manager** advises the Mayor and Council on appropriate forms of community engagement in different situations, and prepares a Community Engagement Strategy and operationalises that strategy.

Where an engagement activity is referenced in a report to the elected Council, this report will include:

- What consultation activities were undertaken

- The number of people and organisations who participated

- The feedback received

- online (website and social media) statistics and feedback.

To support informed decision making, the elected Council's role is to consider the issues and points of view raised by the community during the engagement process.

Reporting back on outcomes - closing the loop

Following a planned consultation process, the outcomes will be published on Council's website. Where an engagement process has been reported to the elected Council, the outcome will also be published in the adopted Council minutes.

Where the submissions have been received from members of the community as part of a consultation process, these submissions will be responded to with advice on the outcome of their submission. When a focus group or a community advisory group if formed by Council as part of an engagement process, feedback on the decision will be presented back to the group.

Supporting our Strategy is the Council Organisational Service Charter, which details our adopted levels of service for engagement with the community, in addition to the planning time-frames outlined in this Strategy.

Monitoring and evaluation

Council will evaluate our engagement activities in five key areas:

- **Process:** how well was the engagement was designed and implemented?

- **Appropriateness:** was the engagement appropriate and how well did the public and stakeholders accept the process?

- **Techniques:** were the techniques used of value to the project, did some techniques work better than others?

- **Reach:** were the people we reached representative of those affected by the decision?

- **Outcomes:** were the intended outcomes of the engagement process achieved?

Learnings from the evaluations will be used to inform future engagement activities, and to update the Community Engagement Toolkit.

✓ Process

✓ Appropriateness

✓ Techniques

✓ Reach

✓ Outcomes

Glossary of planning terms

Planning term	Definition
Contribution plans	A plan developed by Councils for the purpose of gaining financial contributions from new development towards the cost of new and upgraded public amenities and/or services required to accommodate the new development.
Designated development	Designated Development refers to developments that are high-impact developments (e.g. likely to generate pollution) or are located in or near an environmentally sensitive area (e.g. a coastal wetland).
Development control plans	A plan that provides detailed planning and design guidelines to support the planning controls in a LEP.
Gateway determination	A gateway determination is issued following an assessment of the strategic merit of a proposal to amend or create an LEP and allows for the proposal to proceed to public exhibition.
Local environmental plan (LEP)	An environmental planning instrument developed by a local planning authority, generally a Council. An LEP sets the planning framework for a Local Government Area.

Appendix A - Exhibited development

Exhibited development includes any of the following:

1. Air transport facilities; Airstrips; Amusement centres; Biosolids treatment facilities; Brothel; Canal estate development; Car parks; Caravan parks; Cemeteries; Charter and tourism boating facilities; Community facilities; Correctional centres; Crematoria; Eco-tourist facilities; Education facility; Entertainment facilities; Exhibition Villages; Extractive industries; Freight transport facilities; Function centres; Funeral homes; Hazardous storage establishments; Heavy Industry; Heavy industrial storage establishments; Helipads; Highway service centres; Home occupations (sex services); Industrial training facilities; Industries; Intensive livestock agriculture; Markets; Marinas; Mining; Mortuaries; Offensive Storage establishment; Place of Public Worship; Port facilities; Public administration buildings; Recreation facilities (major); Recreation facilities (outdoor); Registered clubs; Restricted premises; Rural industries; Service stations; Sewage treatment plants; Sex services premises; Telecommunication facilities; Timber and Building Supplies; Tourist and Visitor Accommodation; Transport depots; Vehicle sales and hire premises; Waste or resource management facilities; Water recycling facilities; Water supply systems;

2. Subdivisions of land resulting in 10 or more lots;

3. The demolition of a work, relic or place within a Heritage Conservation Area or Heritage Item;

4. The use of a building or land referred to in Clause 5.10 (10) – Heritage Conservation Incentives – Heritage Conservation Areas of the LEP for a purpose that, but for those clauses, would have been prohibited under the LEP;

5. Draft community participation plan;

6. Draft local strategic plans;

7. Planning proposals for local environmental plans subject to a gateway determination;

8. Draft development control plans;

9. Draft contribution plans.

Development listed in 3) and 4) above is not exhibited development if it involves the partial demolition of a heritage item or the demolition of a building or work within a Heritage Conservation Area if, in the opinion of Council, the partial demolition or demolition will be of a minor nature and will not adversely affect the environmental heritage of the Bega Valley.

Note: Where a development application includes elements, which are both exhibited and non-exhibited, the whole of the application shall be exhibited development.

Appendix B - Notified development

Development, other than Exhibited Development, which is required to be notified to one or more adjoining land owners is referred to as Notified Development.

1. Advertising structures; Animal boarding and training establishments; Boarding houses; Boat building and/or repair facilities; Boat sheds; Bulky Goods premises; Business premises; Camping grounds; Cellar door premises; Child Care Facilities; Commercial premises; Depots; Dual occupancies; Dwellings (greater than one storey); Earthworks; Electricity generating works; Emergency services facilities; Exhibition home; Forestry; Flood mitigation works; Food and drink premises (change of use); Group homes; Health services facilities; Home-based child care; Hostel; Industrial retail outlets; Information and education facility; Intensive plant horticulture; Kiosk; Landscape and garden supplies; Light industries; Liquid Fuel depot; Mixed use development; Mooring pens; Moorings; Multi dwelling housing; Offices; Passenger transport facilities; Pond based aquaculture; Public administration buildings; Public utility undertakings; Recreation facilities (indoor); Research stations; Residential care facility; Residential Flat building; Respite day care centres; Restriction facilities; Retail premises; Roads; Roadside stalls; Rural industries; Rural supplies; Rural workers' dwellings; Self Storage units; Semi-detached dwellings; Seniors Housing; Neighbourhood shops; Shop top housing; Signage; Storage premises; Truck depots; Vehicle body repair workshops; Vehicle repair stations; Veterinary hospitals; Warehouse or distribution centres; Water supply systems; Wholesale supplies;

2. Any development that seeks variations to setbacks established by Council's Development Control Plan;

3. Subdivision of land resulting in 3 to 9 lots.

Office Use - Document Control

Revision Number	Date	Revision Details	Author	Reviewer	Approver
1	18 September 2019	Draft for public exhibition	Community Development Officer	Manager, Community Connections	Director, Community Environment and Planning
2	27 November 2019	Final version	Community Development Officer	Director Community, Environment and Planning Manager Community Connections	Council

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