



CUMBERLAND  
COUNCIL



*Cumberland Council*  
Community Engagement  
and Participation Strategy



This Community Engagement and Participation Strategy has been created in keeping with the requirements of Section 402 of the *Local Government Act 1993* and the *Environmental Planning and Assessment Act 1979*, No 203 Part 2 Division 2.6 Section 2.22. Please refer to Appendix B for more information.

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# A message from the General Manager

My number one priority as General Manager is strengthening the relationship between Council and the community, building trust and improving customer satisfaction.

I'm delighted to introduce Council's first Community Engagement and Participation Strategy, which will turn these good intentions into actions that help shape the future of Cumberland.

Community engagement is more than just sending out surveys or putting documents on public exhibition. It's about our commitment to use the information you give us to shape and influence the decisions that affect you.

This Strategy documents Cumberland Council's commitment to creating engagement opportunities that are genuine, transparent and support informed decision making by Cumberland's elected representatives.

We will improve information sharing, ensure our engagement methods are inclusive, clearly articulate the community's ability to influence outcomes and show how participation has informed or influenced decision making.

We're committed to continuous improvement. So while the life of this document is three years, it is a living document and will be updated annually to respond to emerging trends, within the community and within best practice community engagement.

I want to take this opportunity to thank everyone who participated in co-designing our first Community Engagement and Participation Strategy.

We really value your input and look forward to continually demonstrating how your contribution will positively impact Council's future plans, policies and programs.



**Hamish McNulty**  
General Manager · Cumberland Council

# A message from the Mayor

Cumberland has seen a lot of change over the past two years.

I acknowledge that during this period, there may have been times when you felt there wasn't an opportunity for you to have your say on some of the changes that were implemented.

But change can also be a good thing.

For example, Council is changing the way it engages with the community. This will be a change for the better.

We took the first step in April 2018, when Councillors unanimously adopted Cumberland Council's first Community Engagement Policy, an expression of Council's commitment to engaging with the community on matters that affect them.

The next step was co-designing a Community Engagement and Participation Strategy with the community. We sought your feedback on why, when and in what way you want to participate. The result is this document, which will guide the way Council engages with the community over the next three years.

Ultimately the goal is that Council's plans, policies and programs better reflect the interests and concerns of the community and that we promote sustainable decisions by recognising and communicating the needs and interests of all participants.

I'd like to take this opportunity to thank everyone who contributed to the development of Cumberland Council's first Community Engagement and Participation Strategy.

I firmly believe that our best days are before us.



**Greg Cummings**  
Mayor · Cumberland Council

# About this Strategy

## About this Strategy

Cumberland Council adopted its first Community Engagement Policy in April 2018 and this is its first Community Engagement and Participation Strategy. The purpose of this Strategy is to guide engagement practices with the local community and stakeholders when Council is developing its plans, policies and programs.

This Community Engagement and Participation Strategy outlines the guiding principles and approach for ensuring the community has an opportunity to have their say in a meaningful way.

Six workshops were held in July 2018 to enable the community, stakeholders and staff to co-design the Strategy. To have a fair representation of attendees and to ensure flexibility of location and time, different sessions were held in Merrylands, Auburn and Pemulwuy.

A mix of community representatives, staff and elected representatives participated to ensure we had a wide range of views to help shape this Strategy. This Strategy reflects the various requirements for community consultation and engagement set out in the *Local Government Act 1993*. The roles and responsibilities are outlined in Appendix A.

This strategy has been developed in line with Section 402 of the *Local Government Act 1993* and the *Environmental Planning and Assessment Act 1979*, No 203 Part 2 Division 2.6 Section 2.22 as outlined in Appendix B.



# Our objectives

Engagement does not necessarily aim to achieve consensus amongst all participants. It is however, ideal for gaining a better understanding of critical issues and attitudes. An important part of engagement with the community is that we ensure it is respectful and meaningful, we are clear about how feedback and input will be used to support decision making, and our engagement objectives are clear. The Strategy seeks to deliver on the following key objectives;

## **Objective 1 - Build capacity**

Council will work closely with community, stakeholders and staff to create a culture of genuine and relevant engagement, both within our organisation and the community.

## **Objective 2 - Inform and involve**

Council will create and promote inclusive opportunities for effective participation and collaboration for community members who live, work and play in Cumberland, and ensure our communities are engaged and informed.

## **Objective 3 - Accountable and transparent**

Council will show how community and stakeholder participation was used to inform and influence decision making by closing the loop. Council will lead with integrity and encourage innovation.

## **Objective 4 - Continuous improvement**

Council will implement a continuous improvement program, incorporating community and stakeholder input, to develop a more open and participatory Council.

# How we will monitor and evaluate

As part of our commitment to continuous improvement, Council will undertake quarterly reviews of its Community Engagement and Participation Strategy objectives and action plan. The Strategy will be reviewed every three years with the next review scheduled for December 2021.

Annually, we will measure the level of community satisfaction with involvement in Council decision making through our Community Satisfaction Survey. Rolling evaluations of engagement on individual projects and decisions will be undertaken as part of our commitment to accountability and continuous improvement.

# What is community engagement?

Community engagement is a broad term that covers the interactions between Council, communities (which could be suburbs or other geographical locations, or groups of people with a common interest or identity) and other stakeholders.

Community engagement allows community members to actively contribute to Council decisions and actions by creating an inclusive environment in which community feedback is embraced, considered and acted upon. It serves as a response to increasing community concern about low levels of trust and confidence in government and addresses the escalating expectation that all levels of government be responsive to the community, and accountable for levels of service and spending.



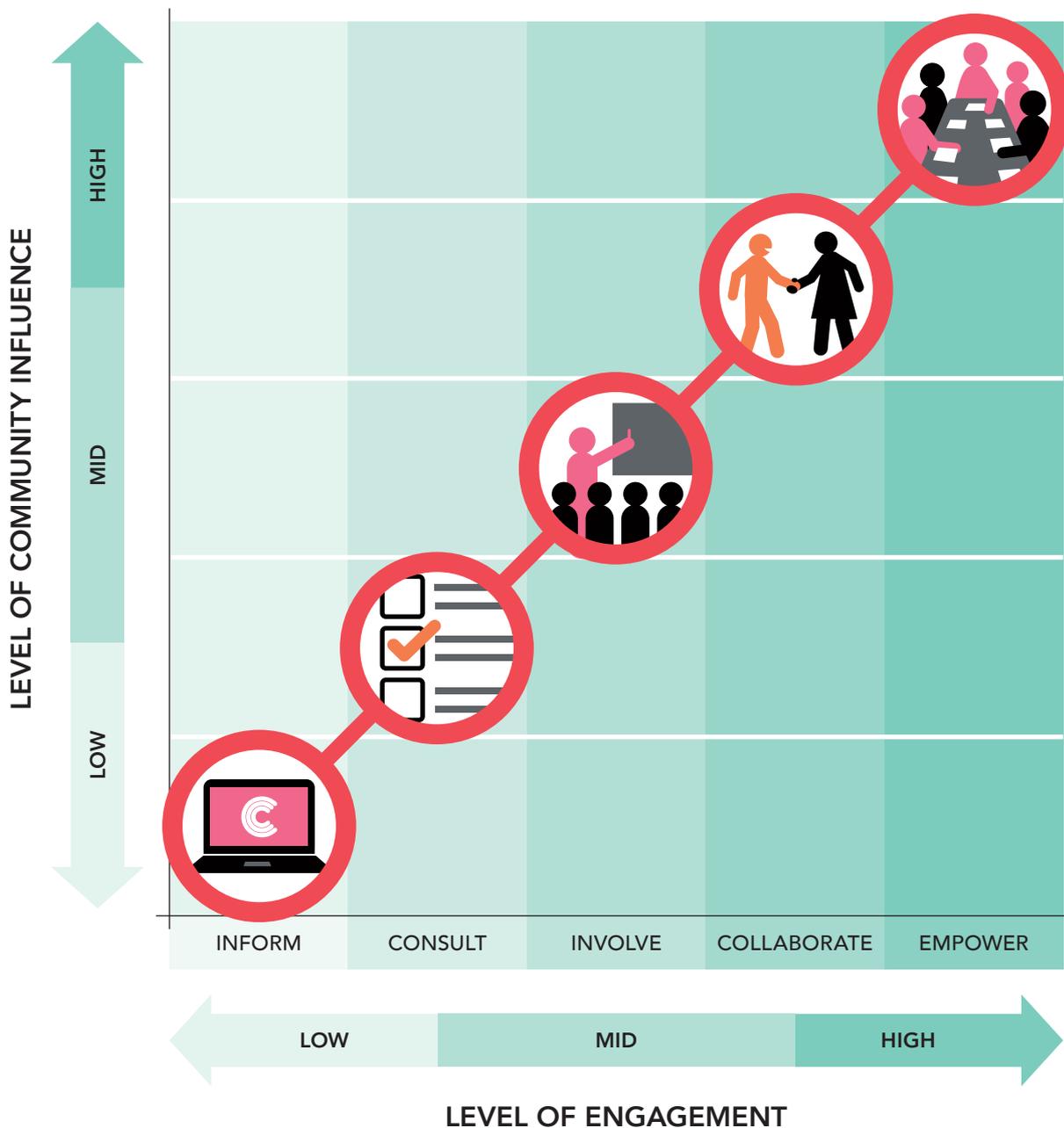
# Community engagement values

Our Community Engagement Policy is built upon the Core Values and Code of Ethics created by the International Association for Public Participation (IAP2).

Our commitment to best practice engagement	
IAP2 Core Values	Our commitment to our community
Community engagement is based on the belief that those who are affected by a decision have a right to be involved in the decision making process.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• We support community engagement as a process to make better decisions that incorporate the interests and concerns of all affected stakeholders and meet the needs of the decision making body.</li> </ul>
Community engagement includes the promise that the community's contribution will influence the decision.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• We will undertake and encourage actions that build trust and credibility for the process among all the participants.</li> <li>• We will enhance the community's participation in the decision making process and assist decision makers in being responsive to the community's concerns and suggestions.</li> </ul>
Community engagement promotes sustainable decisions by recognising and communicating the needs and interests of all participants, including decision makers.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• We will carefully consider and accurately portray the community's role in the decision making process.</li> </ul>
Community engagement seeks out and facilitates the involvement of those potentially affected by or interested in a decision.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• We will encourage the disclosure of all information relevant to the community's understanding and evaluation of a decision.</li> </ul>
Community engagement seeks input from participants in designing how they participate.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• We will ensure that stakeholders have fair and equal access to the community engagement process and the opportunity to influence decisions.</li> </ul>
Community engagement provides participants with the information they need to participate in a meaningful way.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• We will advocate for community engagement processes and will not advocate for interest, party, or project outcome.</li> </ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• We ensure that all commitments made to our community, including those by the decision maker, are made in good faith.</li> <li>• We will communicate back to participants about how their input affected a decision.</li> <li>• We will support and educate the community about the value and use of community engagement.</li> </ul>

# Our engagement methods

Council will use the IAP2 Public Participation Spectrum to help inform the development of engagement strategies to ensure that community and stakeholders are appropriately involved on projects or matters that affect them.



	<b>Inform</b> Lower level of Engagement		<b>Involve</b> Mid level of Engagement		<b>Empower</b> High level of Engagement
	INFORM	CONSULT	INVOLVE	COLLABORATE	EMPOWER
Goal	We will provide the community with balanced and objective information to assist them in understanding the problem, alternatives, opportunities and/or solutions.	We will obtain public feedback on analysis, alternatives and/or decisions.	We will work with you throughout the process to ensure that your concerns and aspirations are consistently understood and considered.	We will work together with you in each aspect of the decision including the development of alternatives and the identification of the preferred solution.	We will help work towards the level of capacity to help the community lead and decide on a matter.
Role of the community	LISTEN	CONTRIBUTE	PARTICIPATE	PARTNER	LEAD
Level of relevant engagement	E.g. Projects by the State Government that affect the local community.	E.g. Participating in an online engagement activity on Council's Have Your Say website.	E.g. Providing input to develop options for an infrastructure project for Cumberland.	E.g. When developing a long-term vision and strategic plan.	E.g. Building capacity skills of small business employees through skills-based training or community members joining the advisory committees which directly influence change.
Examples of engagement methods	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Advertisement</li> <li>• Fact sheet</li> <li>• Newsletter</li> <li>• Social media</li> <li>• Website</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Focus groups</li> <li>• Public exhibition</li> <li>• Surveys</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Workshops</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Participatory decision making</li> <li>• Co-design</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Council advisory committees</li> </ul>

# Cumberland Ward Profiles\*

## Who we are

51.4%

Male



48.6%

Female

你好

66%

Speak a language other than English at home



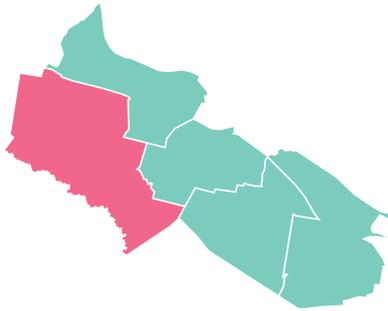
77.8%

of the population has a nominated religion



72.4%

are Australian citizens



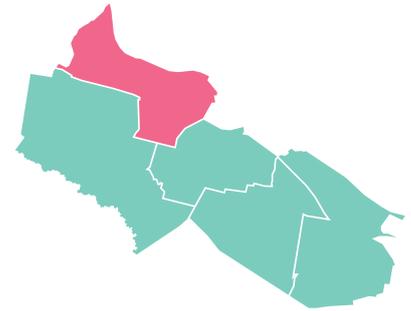
## Greystanes Ward

Greystanes residents are significantly more likely to have lived in the area for more than 20 years, with 65 per cent born in Australia and 56 per cent speaking only English.

Higher amount of those aged 60 years and older, and living in low-density, separate housing.

### Other key characteristics:

- A greater amount of residents are in full-time employment and have vocational qualifications.
- Higher individual and household incomes.
- More likely to rate their quality of life significantly higher.
- More likely to receive information about Council through brochures and flyers.



## Wentworthville Ward

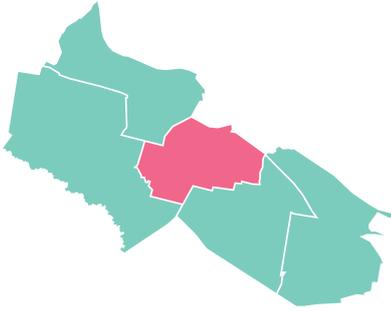
Thirty per cent of Wentworthville residents are parents and homebuilders (aged 35-49) living in medium-density housing with 64 per cent currently in full-time employment.

57 per cent of residents were born overseas and 66 per cent are multilingual. Education levels are also higher with a greater amount having a bachelor or higher degree.

Residents are more likely to move to and from work via public transport and more residents in the Wentworthville Ward also work from home.

### Other key characteristics:

- Higher income earners.
- Wentworthville residents appear more connected and engaged, receiving information about Council through the internet, libraries, community organisations/groups and Council community centres.
- Significantly more likely to have lived in the area for less than two years.



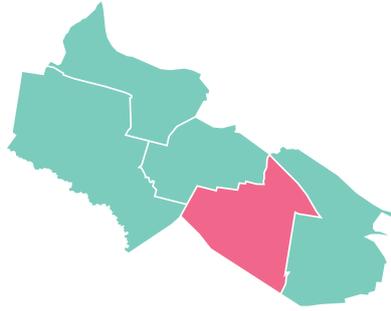
## Granville Ward

Sixty-seven per cent of Granville residents are under the age of 50, with an equal amount born in Australia and overseas. The majority of residents are second-generation from those born overseas, with 70 per cent speaking a language other than English at home.

Granville residents are more likely to be single with and without children. Unemployment rates in Granville are also higher.

### Other key characteristics:

- A higher number of residents require disability assistance.
- Lower income earners.
- 66 per cent drive a car to work.
- Council newsletters, word of mouth and Council community centres are their more likely means of receiving information about Council.



## South Granville Ward

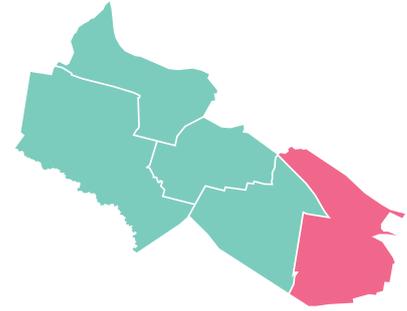
Forty-three per cent of South Granville residents are under the age of 35, with an equal amount born in Australia and overseas and 79 per cent being multilingual.

Residents are more likely to require disability assistance. A greater proportion live in separate housing and are unemployed.

Education levels are lower with 60 per cent indicating they have no qualifications. This is further represented in the lower income levels of the area.

### Other key characteristics:

- Quality of life was rated significantly lower in the South Granville Ward.
- Internet connection within South Granville is lower.
- Residents are more likely to receive information about Council through email, Council newsletters, Facebook and Twitter.



## Regents Park Ward

Regents Park residents are very diverse in their ages, culture, employment and education.

53 per cent of residents are aged between 25-49, living in medium to high-density housing. 68 per cent were born overseas and 82 per cent speak a language other than English at home.

### Other key characteristics:

- Higher number of residents are living in a group household and are couples with no children.
- 54 per cent have no qualifications.
- 36 per cent utilise the train network to get to and from work. Walking and cycling are also popular.
- The number of residents with internet connection is higher.
- Regents Park residents are more likely to receive information about Council through newspapers (77 per cent).

\* Source: Australian Bureau of Statistics 2016 Census of Population and Housing

# Community Engagement Objectives

## Objective 1: Build capacity

Council will work closely with community, stakeholders and staff to create a culture of genuine and relevant engagement, both within our organisation and the community.

### We will:

- Educate staff and stakeholders about community engagement and its use by Council.
- Provide training to increase the capacity of staff when undertaking community engagement.
- Build a whole of organisation approach to ensuring community engagement processes and procedures are included in our planning and delivery of programs, projects and services.



## Key actions

Item	Deliverables	2018-2019	2019-2020	2020-2021
1.1	Finalise Community Engagement Procedures, including protocols for accessibility requirements for engagement methods and venues.			
1.2	Create a Community Engagement Toolkit for staff, including standardised templates and checklist for all community engagement documents.			
1.3	Create guidelines and protocols to promote participation of people from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds in community engagement initiatives.			
1.4	Deliver training to enhance staff skills in community engagement, including cultural awareness.			
1.5	Create a centralised calendar of community engagement opportunities with Council.			
1.6	Develop a database of community members who wish to be updated on Council engagement activities.			
1.7	Ensure that Councillors are informed about upcoming community engagement activities and provided with an opportunity to be involved.			
1.8	Improve and increase marketing and promotion to raise community awareness and understanding of Council engagement activities.			
1.9	Investigate the feasibility of a mobile van or vehicle equipped for engagement activities.			

## Objective 2: Inform and involve

Council will create and promote inclusive opportunities for effective participation and collaboration for community members who live, work and play in Cumberland. Council will ensure our communities are engaged and informed.

### We will:

- Clearly communicate and promote engagement opportunities.
- Develop partnerships and relationships with individuals, community leaders, groups, services and other agencies in Cumberland.
- Create more opportunities for listening and to provide feedback.
- Tailor engagement activities to our culturally and linguistically diverse communities.



## Key actions

Item	Deliverables	2018-2019	2019-2020	2020-2021
2.1	Educate the community on how they can be involved in community engagement activities and decision making opportunities.			
2.2	Clearly communicate and promote engagement opportunities through improved information sharing, including digital communications.			
2.3	Trial regular meet and greets with Councillors in town centres.			
2.4	Build relationships with community and stakeholders, including those that enable Council to better reach culturally and linguistically diverse communities.			
2.5	Develop partnership opportunities with community leaders, groups, services and other agencies in Cumberland to help increase participation in community engagement initiatives and identify opportunities for collaboration.			
2.6	Acquire and develop online engagement resources, including apps and interactive mapping tools.			
2.7	Identify inclusive and accessible communications channels and engagement methods that allow for increased participation in community engagement activities.			
2.8	Investigate ways to improve community engagement opportunities in staffed community centres and facilities, by enabling pop-ups and activations.			

## Objective 3: Accountable and transparent

Council will show how community and stakeholder participation was used to inform and influence decision making by closing the loop. Council will lead with integrity and encourage innovation.

### We will:

- “Close the loop” in a variety of ways, including public reports and email, with a focus on how feedback was considered.
- Be transparent in reporting to the community on opportunities to be involved in Council’s decision-making processes.
- Ensure that decision making is responsive to the needs of residents and receptive to their diverse opinions.



## Key actions

Item	Deliverables	2018-2019	2019-2020	2020-2021
3.1	Adhere to Council's Code of Conduct and Customer Service Charter when delivering community engagement initiatives.			
3.2	Prioritise community engagement as a rolling agenda item on all Senior Management Team meetings.			
3.3	Create an agreed follow up process to be utilised across the organisation post engagement.			
3.4	Develop resources that explain how decisions are made by Council and how to influence them, giving consideration to multilingual versions where needed.			
3.5	Develop guidelines for the community engagement section of Council reports prepared for Council meetings, incorporating standardised summary reports presenting key findings from a community engagement project.			
3.6	Identify ways to incorporate 'how community engagement was used to influence a decision' in existing reporting mechanisms, for example, Council's Annual Report.			
3.7	Prepare an outcomes document from Council Meetings that explains what decisions were made and how they will impact the community.			

## Objective 4: Continuous improvement

Council will implement a continuous improvement program, incorporating community and stakeholder input, to develop a more open and participatory Council.

### We will:

- Continually develop and improve Council's community engagement practices and capacity through regular review and evaluation.
- Gather feedback about the effectiveness of consultation and communicate outcomes to all stakeholders.
- Continually undertake industry and market research.



## Key actions

Item	Deliverables	2018-2019	2019-2020	2020-2021
4.1	Map community engagement processes and procedures across the organisation to assist in evaluating and finding efficiencies.			
4.2	Consolidate the number of survey and feedback tools used across Council and centralise all research and findings in one accessible location for all staff to access.			
4.3	Create a research network for staff to share research they have commissioned or undertaken that would be useful to other areas of Council.			
4.4	Introduce knowledge sharing opportunities within Council to evaluate the successes and failures of engagement programs and share lessons for ongoing improvement.			
4.5	Continue to research our diverse community and what this means for community engagement.			
4.6	Include questions around community engagement in regular surveys with the community.			
4.7	Research industry benchmarking to track reporting progress and community involvement in decision making.			
4.8	Implement evidence-based and emerging best practice approaches to community engagement.			

# Appendix A

## Statutory roles and responsibilities

This Strategy reflects the various requirements for community consultation and engagement set out in the *Local Government Act 1993*. The Act defines the following roles and responsibilities:

- **Councillors** represent the collective interests of residents, ratepayers and the local community; and facilitate communication with the community.
- **The Council** as a whole consults regularly with community organisations and other key stakeholders, and keeps them informed of its decisions.
- **The 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.
- **The General Manager** advises the Mayor and Council on appropriate forms of community engagement in different situations, and prepares a Community Engagement Strategy.



# Appendix B

## Legislation and requirements

### **Integrated Planning and Reporting, Section 402 of Local Government Act 1993**

Under this section of the Act this document must identify community and stakeholders in Cumberland, outline engagement methods that Council will use to interact with these groups and outline the social justice principles of access, equity, participation and rights.



### **Community Participation Plans, Environmental Planning and Assessment Act 1979**

The above legislation was created to help the community understand how they can participate in planning decisions in a clear and easy to understand way.

Under this legislation this document outlines when and how Council will engage with community and stakeholders across all planning decisions.

The legislation includes the following regulations and provisions relating to public exhibition.

## **Exhibition periods for strategic planning documents**

The following plans will be placed on public exhibition for a minimum of 28 days:

- Draft local strategic planning statements
- Draft development control plans
- Draft contributions plans

Any draft regional or district strategic plans will be placed on public exhibition for a minimum of 45 days.

## **Exhibition periods for development applications and other matters**

Applications for development consent, other than for complying development certificate, designated development or for State significant development will be placed on public exhibition for a minimum of 14 days.

The following applications will be placed on public exhibition for a minimum of 28 days:

- Development consent for designated development
- Development consent for State significant development
- Environmental impact statement
- Environmental impact statement for State significant infrastructure.

## **Provisions relating to public exhibition**

- Decisions on publicly exhibited plans and applications are not to be made until after exhibition period.
- Submissions with respect to a plan, application or other matter may be made during the minimum period of public exhibition.
- The period between 20 December and 10 January (inclusive) is excluded from the calculation of a period of public exhibition.
- If a particular matter has different exhibition or notification periods the longer period will apply.
- Council is not required to make environmental impact statements whose publication would be contrary to the public interest because of its confidential nature or for any other reason available for public inspection.



## **Mandatory notification requirements for applications and decisions**

The mandatory notification requirements for development and other applications and decisions are as follows:

### **A. DEVELOPMENT APPLICATIONS**

Notification requirements for Development Applications (DAs) are detailed in Council's Development Control Plans (DCPs), as follows:

- *Auburn DCP 2010* Section 3 of the Introduction
- *Parramatta DCP 2011* Appendixes - Appendix 5
- *Holroyd DCP 2013* Part E

Council is currently preparing a consolidated DCP for Cumberland, which, once adopted, will consolidate and harmonise the requirements in these DCPs.

Council's policy *Development Applications - Handling of Public Submissions* at [cumberland.nsw.gov.au/development/policies-plans-and-controls](http://cumberland.nsw.gov.au/development/policies-plans-and-controls) sets out how Council will handle public submissions.

### **B. SECTION 4.55 MODIFICATION APPLICATIONS**

Notification requirements for Section 4.55 Modification Applications are also detailed in Council's DCPs as follows:

- *Auburn DCP 2010* Section 3 of the Introduction
- *Parramatta DCP 2011* Appendixes - Appendix 5
- *Holroyd DCP 2013* Part E

## C. PLANNING PROPOSALS

- Pre-Gateway notification (non-statutory) of all Planning Proposals will be undertaken in accordance with Council's *Planning Proposal Notification Policy*. This policy requires notification periods according to the relative impact of the planning proposal.
- Should the notification period fall within the Christmas holiday period (that is, unable to be completed prior to 15 December), then the minimum notification period set out in this policy will be extended until 31 January to ensure reasonable opportunity for public comment.

*Note: Council officers will need to consider the Department of Planning's 90 day timeline for PPs when determining an extension to the existing notification period.*

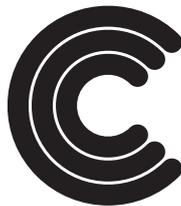
- The statutory post-Gateway notification period is determined by the State Government, stipulated in the Gateway Determination, and is implemented by Council.

## D. PLANNING AGREEMENTS

Consultation requirements for Planning Agreements are detailed in Council's Planning Agreements Policy (refer to Part 6 of Council's Planning Agreements Guidelines).

When a decision is determined by the Minister (or the Greater Sydney Commission), Council or relevant planning authority, public notification including details around the decision, the date of decision, reasons for the decision and how the community views were taken into account in making the decision is mandatory.





CUMBERLAND  
COUNCIL

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