



PARKES SHIRE COUNCIL

Community Engagement Strategy 2017/18 - 2020/21 *(Updated October 2019)*



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Cr Ken Keith OAM *Mayor Parkes Shire*

In March 2017, Council invited members of the community to join the conversation and review the Community Strategic Plan that was developed originally in 2006 and reviewed in 2009 and 2012. The vision and future directions for the Shire have been considered valid and on track to guide the development of the Shire over the next 12 years and beyond.

The vision and aspirations of the community have been translated into the Parkes 2030 Community Strategic Plan to guide the projects and programs that Council will deliver over the next term of Council and beyond.

Welcome

Welcome to the Parkes Shire Council Community Engagement Strategy.

Our Community Engagement Strategy guides the approach which we use to build positive community relationships. The framework aims to support the planning, delivery and reporting of all that we do, so that together with our community we build a vibrant Parkes Shire.

The Community Engagement Strategy 'Continuum', is a dynamic process that encourages continuous conversation, learning, improved decision making and community collaboration to achieve progress and create opportunities for the region.

Through this process, we aim to facilitate a collaborative way of working to further strengthen the ties between each of our townships. Council believes that by consulting and engaging with our communities and agreeing on aspirations and priorities, we create more resilient and sustainable communities with a focus on a positive future.

The expertise, skills, experience and local knowledge of our community members and other stakeholders are an invaluable part of the decision making process, ensuring Council makes fair and informed decisions for the Parkes Shire.

To ensure a broad cross section of the community is engaged and consulted, Council proactively works to gather the community's aspirations and priorities using a range of methods.

While Council continues to involve the community using the traditional forms of engagement, including workshops, surveys, meetings, public notices and letters, it now includes more contemporary methods of engagement, such as digital and social media platforms.

I thank the community for their continued participation in helping develop the projects that we will deliver over the next term of Council and beyond, to ensure it all adds up to a vibrant Parkes Shire.

Ken Keith OAM
Mayor of Parkes Shire Council

1. Purpose of the Community Engagement Strategy

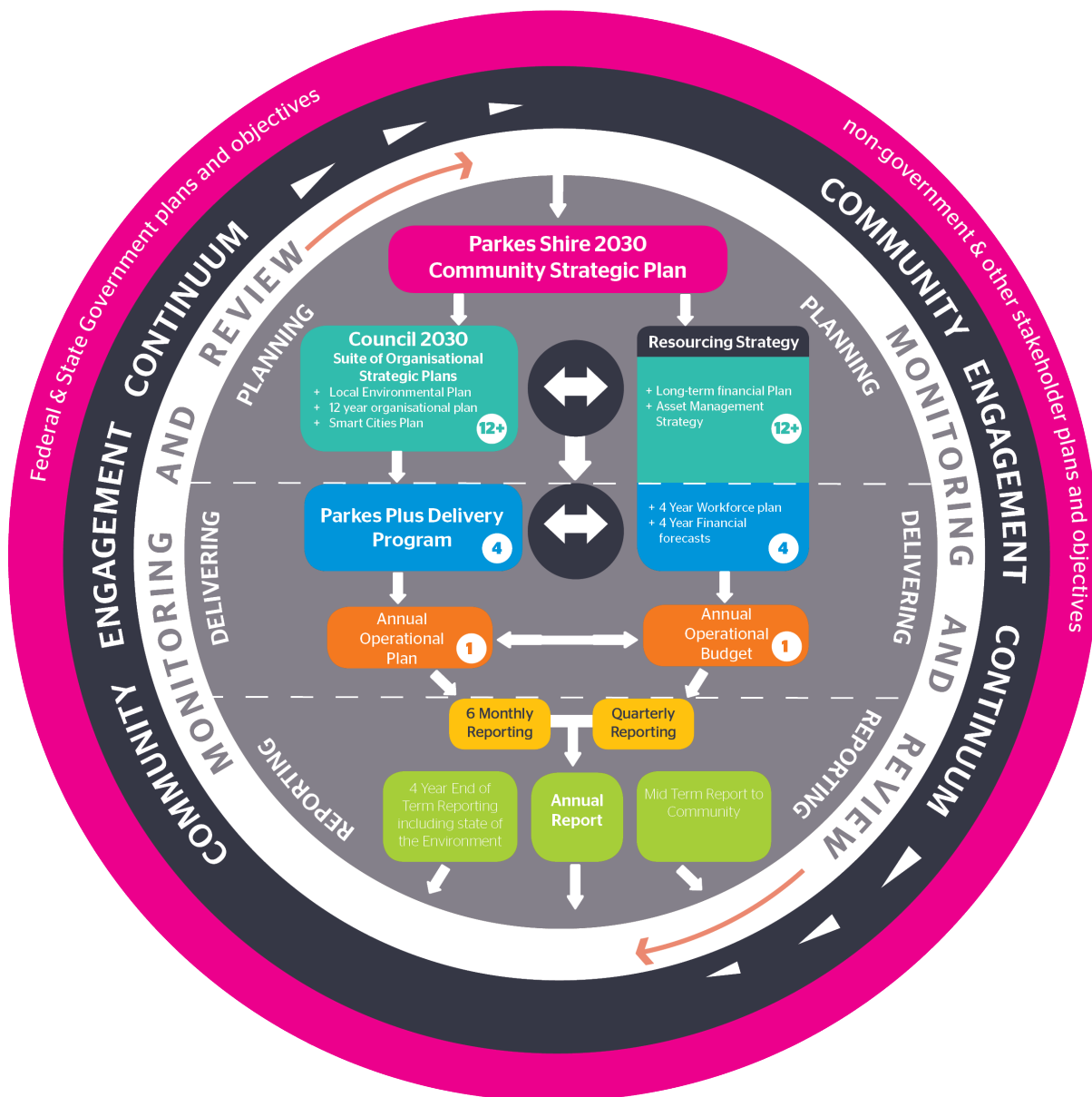
The Community Engagement Strategy has been developed to guide ongoing communication between Council and the community for planning for the future. An engaged and involved community is a key target outlined in Council's Community Strategic Plan.

Parkes Shire Council actively encourages community participation in the governance and decision making process and sees that this is an essential factor to successful decision making. Council is committed to having open, honest, respectful and truthful communication with the community and encourages the community to do the same. This strategy aims to increase levels of engagement in a way that the community expects.

The Community Engagement Strategy has been updated to satisfy the requirements of a Community Participation Plan (CPP) under Division 2.6 and Schedule 1 of the Environmental Planning and Assessment Act 1979 (EP&A Act). Specifically, the following sections of this strategy have been included or amended to meet these requirements:

- + Section 4 Objectives & Guiding Principles of Community Engagement identifies Council's community engagement activities, which demonstrate regard to the Community Participation Principles as set out in Section 2.23(2) of the EP&A Act.
- + In accordance with Section 2.23(1) of the EP&A Act, the document details how and when the Council enables community participation in Section 5. Levels of Community Engagement, Section 6. Planning Community Engagement, Section 7. The Community Engagement Continuum and Section 9. Methods of Engagement.
- + Section 10 Community Engagement in Council's Land-Use Planning and Development Control Activities details when Council will undertake community engagement when exercising planning functions. This section also sets out the minimum mandatory public exhibition timeframes and other matters as per Schedule 1 of the EP&A Act.





2. What is Community Engagement

Community Engagement is defined as “any process that involved the community in problem-solving and decision making and uses community input to make better decisions” (International Association of Public Participation (IAP2))

Community Engagement is a two-way process that seeks to inform, identify issues and seek resolution with the community using a range of techniques.

Benefits of Community Engagement

Parkes Shire Council recognises that communities which are informed, consulted and empowered are successful communities. Successful community engagement will demonstrate a collaborative effort to resolve issues and plan for the future which will result in better outcomes for Council and the community. Community engagement complements the official electoral process and is a key method for participatory democracy.

1. Decision making is improved

Better decisions are made when we have information and all points of view have had the opportunity to be heard. Where feasible and desirable, Council's decisions need to match the needs and aspirations of the community.

2. It builds trust

Trust and understanding grows in an environment where engagement and involvement is taken seriously.

3. It builds networks

When we work together we meet other people, build relationships and have the opportunity to form purposeful networks.

4. It helps create stronger communities

Trusting, confident and involved communities are stronger and able to respond to change and circumstances "together" using their combined resources on potential solutions.

3. Values when Engaging with our Community

The following values underpin Council's approach to all community engagement activities. Parkes Shire Council will be:

+ Caring and Friendly

Community engagement will be conducted in a way that demonstrates a genuine commitment for quality consultations with the community and a desire to hear the community's views and aspirations.

+ Open to new ideas

Community engagement activities will be well planned and directed towards getting a better understanding of the community's views and on issues of importance to them. Consultation activities will provide opportunities for meaningful dialogue and input from key stakeholders.

+ Respectful, acting with integrity and tolerance

Consultation objectives should be well defined from the outset. The role of the community in the decision making process should be made clear and there

should be a recognition of the ultimate decision making responsibilities of elected representatives. Information provided to the community will be comprehensive and provide objective, balanced content about the issue/s involved with any particular project. Planning for community engagement will also include steps to evaluate the effectiveness of the engagement process and its outcomes.

Engaging and willing to work together Community engagement must seek to engage stakeholders at the earliest stage possible and continue to keep them informed and involved throughout the process. Well planned and inclusive community consultation processes are vital to the success of Council's engagement with the community.

Different methodologies will be used and delivered in a way that engages those participating. Innovative methodologies including electronic or on-line technologies will be implemented where possible to encourage participation and engagement of the community.

Strategies should be incorporated into any community engagement plan to ensure Council staff provide feedback to the community about the progress of the project or plan and demonstrate how input received has contributed to the decision making process.

4. Objectives & Guiding Principles of Community Engagement

The following objectives and activities are timely, held at the right time and given enough time. Input is sought before decisions are made. Engagement activities are held at convenient times so as many people as possible can participate. Enough time is allocated to the process so input can be considered and not rushed.

+ Needed information is accessible to all

Information is written in plain English, easy to understand and readily available throughout the Parkes Shire.



+ People are heard, not just listened to

Engagement is a genuine activity and is carried out so community views and priorities are heard, just as Council views and priorities are heard. It works both ways.

+ Expectations are well managed

The purpose of the engagement is clearly stated and expectations agreed. Processes are appropriate and well managed.

+ Feedback is part of the process

Feedback is provided so participants know how their input will be used.

+ Not a 'one size fits all'

Different processes and mediums are used to engage different groups in the community to encourage participation.

+ Learning is central

Engagement processes are opportunities to learn more about our community and the things that affect the Shire. Engagement skills are also built within Council and the community.

These guiding principles demonstrate regard to the Community Participation Principles as set out in Section 2.23(2) of the EP&A Act.



5. Levels of Community Engagement

Council uses four levels of community engagement, each with a promise of response:

1. Inform
2. Consult
3. Involve
4. Collaborate

+ What level of engagement is used when?

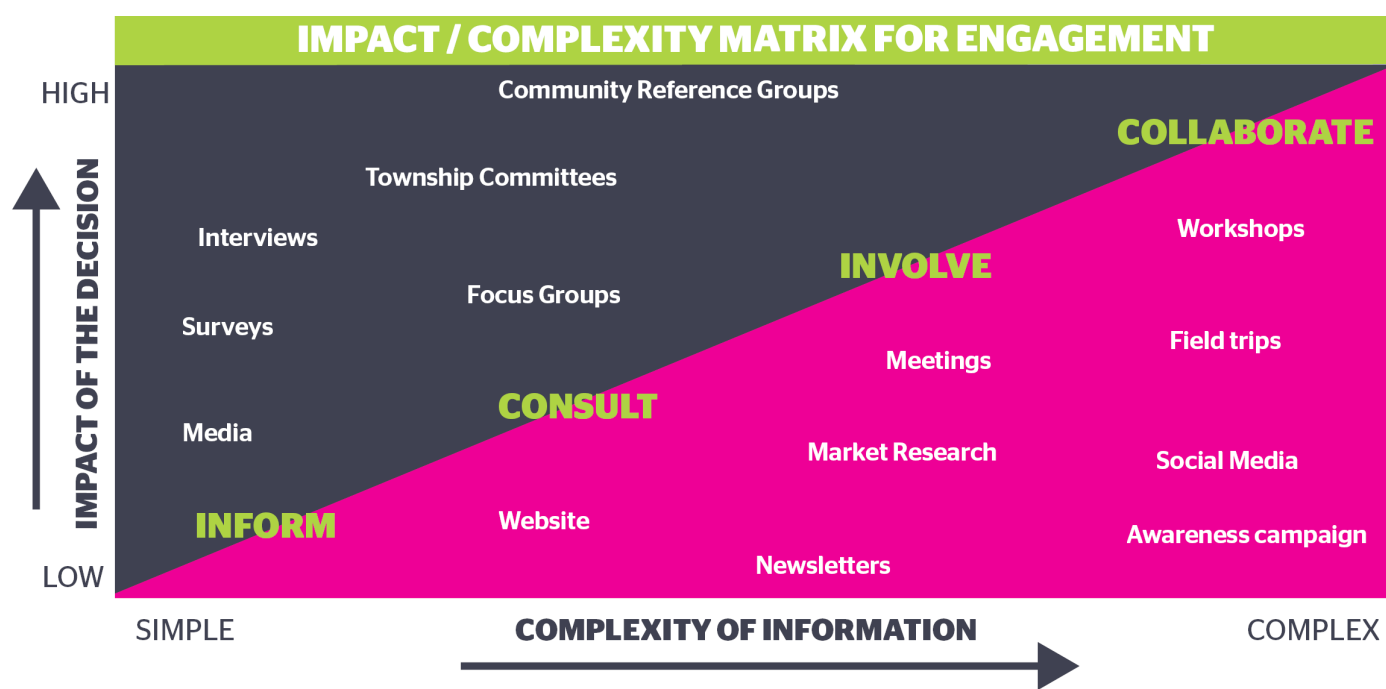
The level of engagement is directly related to the complexity of the information needed and the degree of impact an action could have on the community.

The higher the impact, the more complex the information, the greater the potential risk and therefore the more engagement is needed.

+ Impact and Complexity Matrix

The following Impact and Complexity Matrix links the likely impact and complexity of needed information and the types of community engagement that could be used.

LEVEL	OUR PROMISE
INFORM	We will make sure you have the information you need
CONSULT	We will seek your feedback on options so we make better decisions
INVOLVE	We will explore options and priorities together so we know what is preferred
COLLABORATE	We will work together and share the responsibility



6. Planning Community Engagement

When undertaking community engagement, Council will follow a six step process:

STEP 1: Establish the level of impact and complexity of the information needed

Council will ask:

What is the likely impact of the project or issue on the community? High? Low? or In Between?
Is it localised or does it involve the broader community?
Is the issue or project straightforward and easy to understand or complex?
Where does it sit on the impact/complexity matrix?

STEP 2: Identify the “whole system” around the issue

Council will ask:

Who influences or will be influenced by the issue or project?
List all the individuals, groups and organisations
Make sure those we engage with are “representative” of all relevant stakeholders.

STEP 3: Plan the process and gather relevant information

Council will ask:

What is the purpose of the engagement?
What processes will we use?
What information do we want people to have?
If there is an engagement event, what do we have to organise e.g. venue, catering, materials, technology?
Make a check list.

STEP 4: Engage the community.

Council will ask:

Have we given people enough notice?
Does it clash with another event or priority in the community?
Have we considered convenience?
Am I prepared for the engagement?
Have we made clear what the purpose of the engagement is?
Does everyone know how their input will be used?

STEP 5: Feedback results of engagement

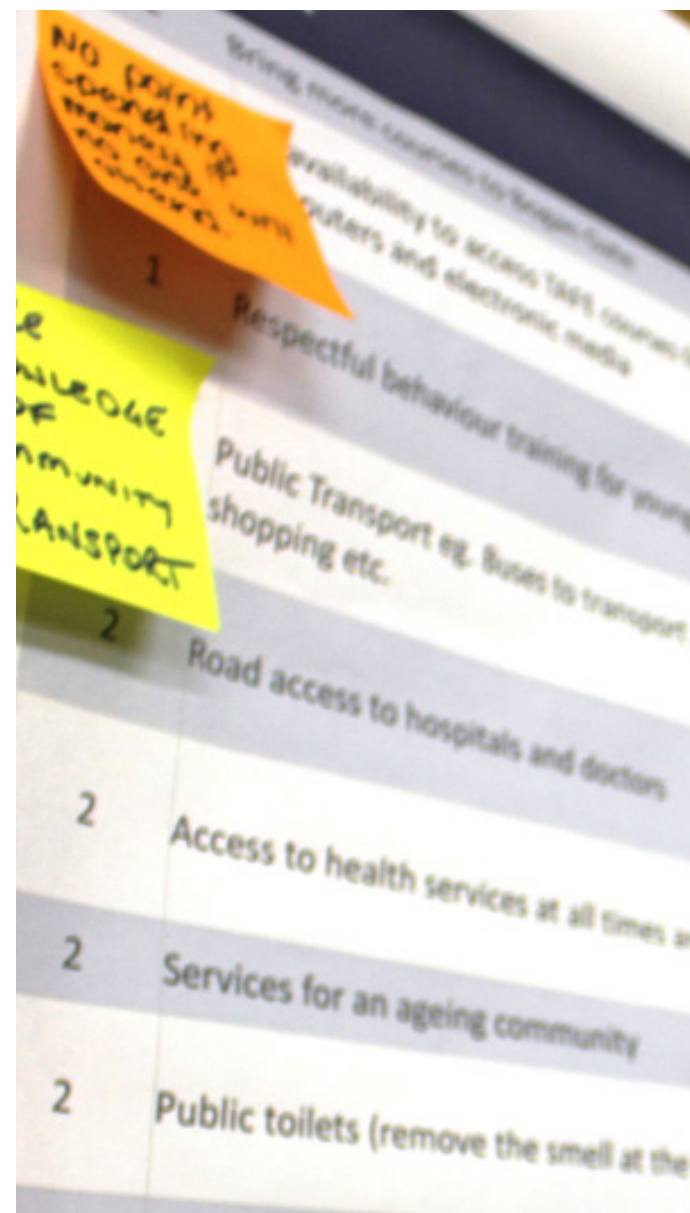
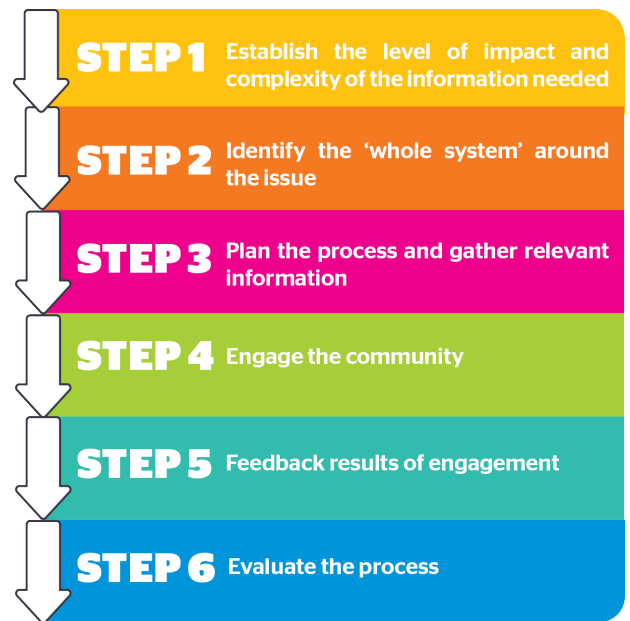
Council will ask:

Have we let our participants know what happened with their input?

STEP 6: Evaluate the process

Council will ask:

What would we do differently next time to improve the process?



7. The Community Engagement Continuum©

A strategy for learning, informed decision-making and working together.

+ Community Engagement in Council's Strategic Planning

Under Council's Integrated Planning and Reporting Framework Community Engagement is built in to the process to ensure that the community is providing feedback, advice and direction to Council's activities. Community engagement is important not only when developing plans and strategies but also in Council's reporting to ensure our community is informed about Council's works and operations.

Community engagement opportunities are "built in" to Council's calendar and represent Council's commitment to keeping our community engaged throughout the planning and delivery of our strategic plans.

Two main rounds of engagement are built into the community engagement calendar "Checking Issues" and "State of the Shire".

+ Checking Issues

The "Checking Issues" round held within May each year provides information and opportunities for feedback and discussion on the upcoming Operational Plan and Budget. Also included in the discussions are topical issues and a progress report on the current program of works.

Throughout the campaign the entire Shire will be engaged with our community being able to hear information from key Council staff and have an opportunity for discussion and to provide feedback.

+ State of the Shire

Within September each year Council will provide our community with a "State of the Shire" campaign. The entire Shire will be engaged and will be informed on Council's works and services over the past year and have the opportunity to provide feedback on asset service levels in the areas of Council's quadruple bottom line reporting: Civic Leadership, Environmental, Social and Economic.

+ Community Engagement throughout all Council Activities

In addition to the Integrated Planning and Reporting and Strategic planning engagement activities, Council is also committed to engaging the community in other Council plans and decisions. These may include but are not limited to:

- Master plans which may include sporting or other precincts or areas
- Changes in Council services or programs
- Significant developments

Council also acknowledges communication and information are key to ensuring our community are informed and engaged. We will continue to utilise our communication channels to ensure that our community is informed and kept up to date with Council's works as per the Parkes Shire Council Communications Policy.

Council is also interested in new ways of engaging with our community including through social media and digital communications and will focus on utilising the power of these channels to best keep our communities informed and as an avenue for feedback and community participation.



"Community engagement in Parkes Shire is not something that is imposed or done just to meet legislative requirements."

"It is the way Council does its work and how Council and the community work together."

**Kent Boyd, General Manager,
Parkes Shire Council**



8. Community Engagement Roles

Community Engagement at Parkes Shire Council is guided by two documents:

1. Community Engagement Strategy (this document)

- + Overview of how Council will engage with the community
- + Summary of methods and techniques
- + Reference to Best Practice required under the Act

2. Community Engagement Toolkit

An internal based resource exists which provides templates and resources to help Council staff develop a community engagement plan for a variety of projects and policies.

+ Councillors and Council Staff

Community engagement is about ensuring the community has an opportunity to participate in the decisions made by Council.

A Councillor's role in community engagement is to participate as an elected member, listen to the views of the community and consider these views when making decisions at Council.

Community engagement provides valuable opportunities for Councillors to hear and understand the voice of the community and ensure that this voice is properly represented when Council meet and make resolutions which impact the future of our community.

A Council staff member's role in community engagement is to organise and facilitate the discussion, record, provide feedback, evaluate the engagement and consider the community's views when making recommendations to Council. Both Councillors and Council staff are encouraged not to dominate or direct community discussions, nor is it to dismiss the community's input. Instead, Councillors and Staff should allow discussions to move forward in an open, respectful and inclusive way.

9. Methods of Engagement

Parkes Shire Council is committed to engaging and informing our community about all Council works and activities.

There are many different methods to engage all relevant stakeholders and Council will use multiple platforms on each project to ensure a broad cross section of the community has been consulted.

Detailed information of how to apply these methods is outlined through the Parkes Shire Council **Community Engagement Toolkit**.

In line with the pre-determined complexity & impact rating of the subject at hand, some of the methods Council will employ to engage with the community include (but are not limited to):

- + Council's corporate website
- + Social Media Platforms
- + Email
- + Councillors
- + Community Newsletter
- + Community Groups
- + Focus Groups / Forums / Workshops
- + Public Notices
- + Letter Box Drop
- + Personal Letter
- + Personal Briefing
- + Survey
- + Site Visits
- + Media
- + Exhibitions





10. Community Engagement in Council's Land-Use Planning and Development Control Activities

The community and stakeholders are engaged on land use planning and development control matters through formal exhibition periods and the development application notification process. The following tables and information set out the exhibition and notification periods for strategic planning documents and development applications, and how the community and stakeholders can make a submission to Council in relation to development application matters.

Development that meets the requirements for neighbour notification is notified to adjoining land owners for the prescribed period.

Publicly exhibited development is development that, in addition to neighbour notification requirements, is advertised in a local newspaper on at least one occasion and available on Council's website for the prescribed period.

Minimum Public Exhibition Periods for Strategic Planning Documents

Strategic Planning Documents	Exhibition Periods
Draft Community Participation Plans	28 days
Draft Local Strategic Planning Statements	28 days
Draft Development Control Plans	28 days
Draft Contribution Plans	28 days
Planning proposals for local environmental plans subject to a gateway determination	28 days or as specified by the gateway determination which may find, due to the minor nature of the proposal, that no public exhibition is required

Minimum Public Exhibition Procedures for Development Applications and other matters

Development Applications	Notification/Exhibition Periods
Application for development consent (other than for complying development certificate, for designated development or for State significant development)	14 days except where the application is exempt from public exhibition or notification as specified below.
Application for development consent for designated development	28 days

Modification to Development Applications	Notification/Exhibition Periods
Application for a Section 4.55(1), 4.55(1A) and 4.55(2) modification	14 days or where determined by a delegated officer that due to the minor nature of the proposal, no public exhibition or notification is required.





Development Applications that will be publicly exhibited

The following development is publicly exhibited development for the purposes of this plan:

- a) Any development where Parkes Shire Council is either the applicant for consent or is the landowner.
- b) Commercial development (in a commercial zone) where the development will adjoin a residential zone (excluding change of use and minor internal alterations and additions).
- c) Development involving heritage Items.
- d) Industry (in an industrial zone) where the development will adjoin a residential zone.
- e) Medium density housing types involving more than 3 separate dwellings.
- f) Subdivisions involving the creation of more than 10 new allotments.
- g) Agricultural produce industry (not in a commercial or industrial zone), amusement centre, animal boarding or training establishment (more than 20 animals), brothel, business premises (not in a commercial or village zone), caravan park, centre-based child care facility, correctional centre, crematorium, depot (not in an industrial zone), educational establishment, entertainment facility, extractive industry, feedlot, food and drink premises (not in a commercial zone), function centre, hazardous storage establishment, health consulting rooms / health services facility (not in a commercial or village zone or health precinct), heavy industrial storage establishment, heavy industry, helipad, highway service centre, hospital, hostel, hotel or motel accommodation (not in a commercial zone), intensive livestock agriculture, liquid fuel depot, medical centre (not in a commercial or village zone or health precinct), mine, mixed-use development (not in a commercial or industrial zone), neighbourhood shop / supermarket (not in a commercial zone), offensive industry / storage establishment, passenger transport facility, places of public workshop, pub (not in a commercial zone), recreation facilities, restaurant / café (not in a commercial or zone), restricted premises, rural industries, sawmill, seniors housing, service station, tourist and visitor accommodation, vehicle repair station / vehicle sales or hire premises (not in an industrial, village or commercial zone), veterinary hospital (not in a commercial or village zone), waste or resource management facility.

How will the application be exhibited?

Where a Development Application or Modification Development Application is required to be publicly exhibited under this plan, the application shall be made available for inspection at the Parkes Shire Council Administration Centre commencing from the date on which the public notice was placed in the local newspaper. The application will also be included on the Parkes Shire Council website.

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.

Development Applications that will be neighbour notified

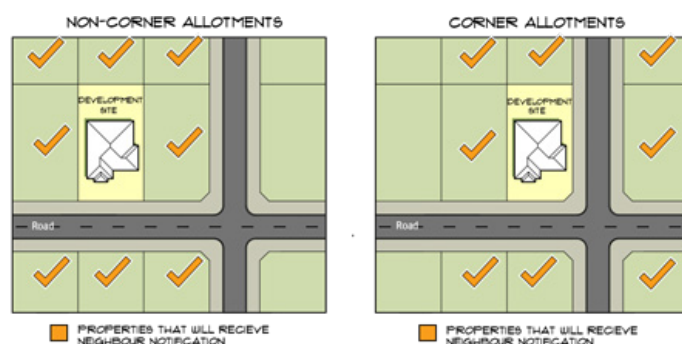
All Development Applications will be subject to neighbour notification, except for the following development:

- a) Any development where Parkes Shire Council is either the applicant for consent or is the land-owner.
- b) Commercial development (in a commercial zone) where the development will adjoin a residential zone (excluding change of use and minor internal alterations and additions).
- c) Development involving heritage Items.
- d) Industry (in an industrial zone) where the development will adjoin a residential zone.
- e) Medium density housing types involving more than 3 separate dwellings.
- f) Subdivisions involving the creation of more than 10 new allotments.
- g) Agricultural produce industry (not in a commercial or industrial zone), amusement centre, animal boarding or training establishment (more than 20 animals), brothel, business premises (not in a commercial or village zone), caravan park, centre-based child care facility, correctional centre, crematorium, depot (not in an industrial zone), educational establishment, entertainment facility, extractive industry, feedlot, food and drink premises (not in a commercial zone), function centre, hazardous storage establishment, health consulting rooms / health services facility (not in a commercial or village zone or health precinct), heavy industrial storage establishment, heavy industry, helipad, highway service centre, hospital, hostel, hotel or

motel accommodation (not in a commercial zone), intensive livestock agriculture, liquid fuel depot, medical centre (not in a commercial or village zone or health precinct), mine, mixed-use development (not in a commercial or industrial zone), neighbourhood shop / supermarket (not in a commercial zone), offensive industry / storage establishment, passenger transport facility, places of public worship, pub (not in a commercial zone), recreation facilities, restaurant / café (not in a commercial or zone), restricted premises, rural industries, sawmill, seniors housing, service station, tourist and visitor accommodation, vehicle repair station / vehicle sales or hire premises (not in an industrial, village or commercial zone), veterinary hospital (not in a commercial or village zone), waste or resource management facility.

Persons to be notified

For Development Applications requiring neighbour notification under the plan, written notification of the proposed development will be provided to the owner(s) of land immediately adjoining or adjacent to the subject land (as shown on Council's Property and Rating System at the time of notification) including land that is separated from the subject land by a watercourse, road, pathway, driveway, railway or similar thoroughfare. The diagram below illustrates the approach:



Where more than one person is listed as the owner, written notification to one of the owners, is taken to be a notice to all of the registered owners.

Making of submissions

Submissions in respect of a Development Application or Modification Development Application that is notified or exhibited must be received by Council within the prescribed period, or within the period as

may be deemed appropriate by the Council or its delegated officers. Public holidays are excluded from this period. The period between 20 December and 10 January (inclusive) is excluded from the calculation of a period of public exhibition.

A submission may be made by any person whether or not that person has been or is entitled to be given notification of the application under the plan.

Submissions must be made in writing and must clearly indicate the name and address of the person making the submission. The submission should relate directly to the application and if the submission is by way of objection, it must state the reasons for objection. Any submissions received by Council may be:

- + Referred to the applicant for consideration.
- + The subject of freedom of information requests under the Government Information (Public Access) Act 2009.
- + Included in Council Business Papers (i.e. made public)

All submissions must be addressed to the General Manager, Parkes Shire Council, 2 Cecile Street, Parkes NSW 2870. Council reserves the right not to consider anonymous submissions.

Considerations of submissions

Where a submission is received in relation to a Development Application or Modification Development Application that has been neighbour notified or exhibited under the plan, and that submission has been received within the period allowed for the making of submissions under the plan, Council must consider that submission prior to the application being determined.

Nothing in the plan prevents Council or its delegated officers from considering a submission that is received outside of the period allowed for making submissions under this plan, provided the application has not already been determined by Council.

The content of any submission received by Council in relation to an application that has been neighbour notified under this plan will be considered in full as part of an assessment report for the application. If the issue(s) raised in the submission cannot be



resolved in full as part of the assessment process, the application will be presented at a monthly meeting of the Council. The terms of any submission(s) will be summarised in the assessment report by the authorised officer. Council is not bound to adopt or support a submission when making its determination.

Decisions on publicly exhibited plans and applications will not be made until after the exhibition period. If a particular matter has different exhibition or notification periods, the longer period will apply.

Amendment of a development post notification

For Development Applications or Modification Applications that are amended post neighbour notification or exhibition and at any time prior to determination, the application will be renotified in accordance with the plan when it is considered that there will be an additional likely environmental impact.

If, in the opinion of Council or its delegated officers, the likely environmental impact is the same or will be reduced as a result of the amendments, the application will not need to be re-notified under this plan.

If an application is withdrawn by the applicant and a subsequent application is made, the new application will need to be notified or exhibited under the plan, as if the previous application had not been made.



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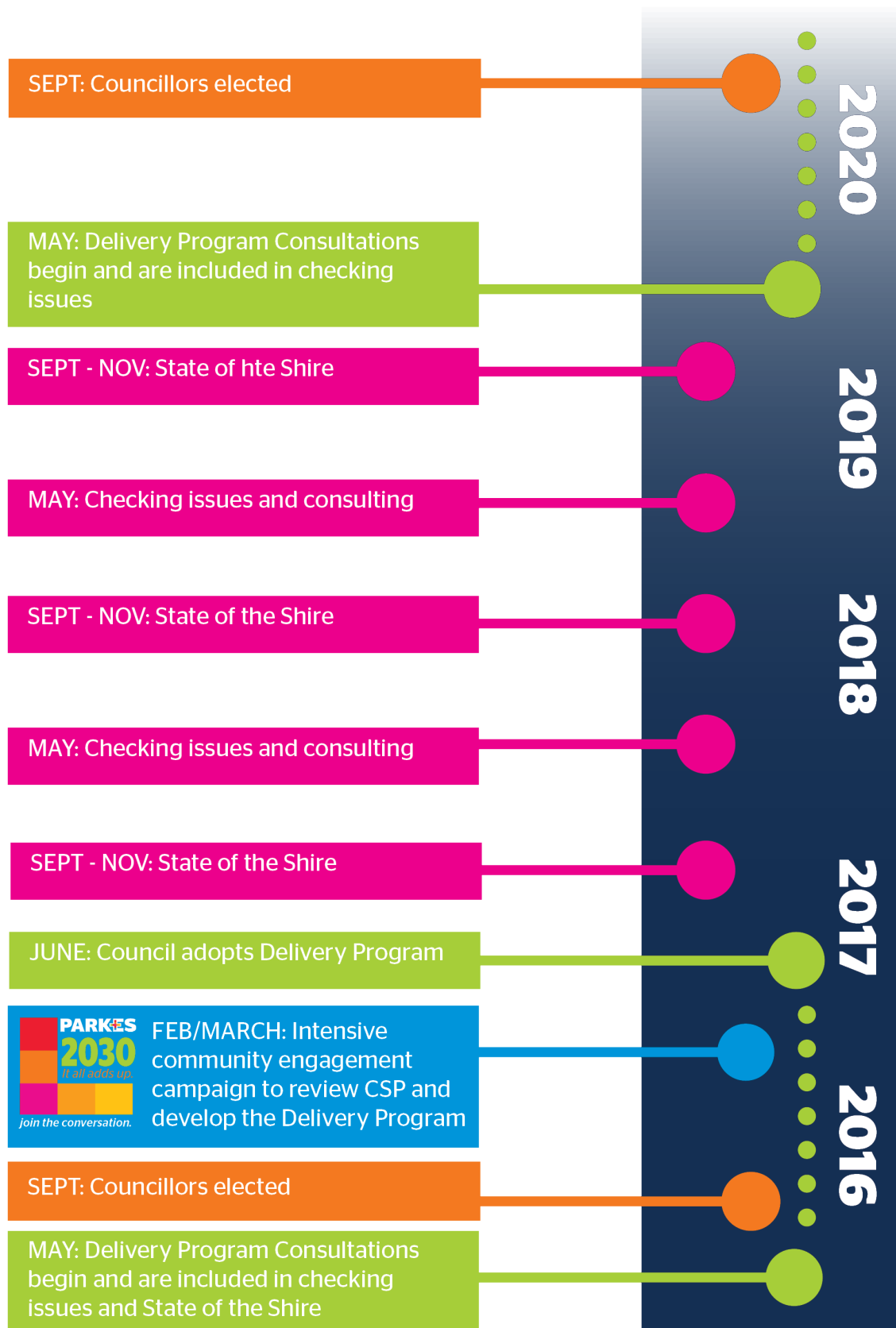
11. Reporting and the Continuum

The following reports will be published by Council to ensure our community is kept informed and up to date and to ensure we are meeting the requirements of legislation and our obligations under the Local Government Act 1993.

- + **Each quarter:** Through Council, the quarterly budget review will be tabled.
- + **Every six months:** Through Council, the progress of the Operational Plan and Delivery Program will be provided.
- + **Annually:** The Annual Report will be tabled and promoted as well as forwarded to the Office of Local Government
- + **Mid-Term Reporting (August):** Throughout the community, presentations and workshops will be held to report on progress and reconfirm priorities as part of the State of the Shire engagements.
- + **End of Term Reporting (May):**
Throughout the community as part of the State of the Shire, the work of the past 4 years of the current term of Council will be presented. Facilitated workshops will review the Community Strategic Plan and the priorities of the Delivery Program so the incoming Council will have an understanding of the Community's preferred future and what it needs to do to help deliver it. The Community Strategic Plan will also be updated with the vision for the Shire spanning a 10 year time frame to 2026.



12. Council Term Timeline





13. The Continuum Continuing

The Community Engagement Continuum, as the name implies is a continuous process where Council and Community learn and build understanding.

Moving through the first cycle of The Continuum has already resulted in building capacity not just within Parkes Shire Council but in the broader community as well. As we move through additional cycles, the knowledge base about what has been achieved in the Shire and what could and should happen in the future will deepen.

There will also be an increase in the skills and capacities to not only engage in future planning but in the design and successful completion of projects.

Having the right knowledge, skills and attitudes is what makes the difference between communities that survive and those that thrive. The Continuum is a vehicle for us not only understanding our communities needs but also building capacity.

Being informed, results in better decision-making and a greater willingness to work together. The Continuum is our continuing journey of learning, informed decision making and working together.





For further information please contact:
Parkes Shire Council Chief Operating Officer
P: 02 6861 2333 | E council@parkes.nsw.gov.au

