



Community Engagement Policy

Council has introduced a Community Engagement Policy to put the views and ideas of the community at the heart of the decision making process. This summary explains why this is important and how Council will engage with the community.

About the policy

The Community Engagement Policy aims to:

- Provide the basis for the community to have an active voice in contributing to Council decisions.
- Outline to the community our genuine intention to consider their input.
- Increase transparency of the decisions that impact the community.
- Build the community's trust in Council's decision making process.
- Contribute to better outcomes for the community.

Community engagement principles

The policy is guided by five key principles, including:

- All community engagement activities have a clearly defined objective and scope.
- Everyone who participates in community engagement can access objective, relevant and timely information.
- We will work with people who have an interest or are affected by the particular matter.
- We provide support to assist our community to be involved in the process in a meaningful way.
- We are transparent about how the community engagement process will influence the decisions that Council makes.

Our commitment to the community

Council is committed to understanding the views of the community. We know that the community plays an important role in shaping its future direction.

The skills and experiences of those in the community should be sought and Council aims to strengthen its partnership with the community by supporting and valuing the community's contribution.

How does engagement benefit the community?

The best decisions are informed decisions. By engaging with the community we're engaging with local needs, knowledge, and experience to make informed decisions for Baw Baw Shire.

We know that supporting a meaningful exchange of information with genuine intention, builds transparency, trust, and better outcomes.

Designing community engagement

To meet the community’s needs across various engagement topics, Council activities and decisions have been classified into three categories. Council can raise matters to a higher category where community feedback indicates this is necessary.

Category 1 is the highest category, for these activities the community has the highest level of participation in the decision making process. The following table outlines the level of engagement that Council will undertake for each of the three categories.

		Increased level of Community Participation				
		Inform	Consult	Involve	Collaborate	Empower
Role of Council		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.
Activity category		Category 3: Matters which are of lower impact or interest to the community, or where the community’s ability to influence is limited.		Category 2: Matters which are of higher or long-term impact and significant interest to the community.		Category 1: Matters which require deliberative engagement under the Local Government Act.

Public exhibition

Council will place matters on public exhibition in accordance with relevant Acts or Regulations. Unless otherwise specified, a public exhibition will be open for a minimum of 21 calendar days. Council commits to placing draft documents resulting from the following, on public exhibition before Council endorsement:

- a deliberative engagement process (Category 1); or
- a matter of high or long-term impact and of significant interest to the community (Category 2)

Outcomes of the public exhibition process will be considered by Council at a Council Meeting.

Please visit Council’s website to read the full Community Engagement Policy.