## Yarra Ranges Council

# Community Engagement Policy

## Summary of changes

Minor wording changes to improve clarity have been made in the draft revised Policy. Additional changes, based on internal and community feedback include:

* Stronger connection to legislative requirements.
* Removal of unclear or ambiguous statements.
* Explanation of how community engagement contributes to decision-making.
* Reordering of content to better reflect the planning of formal community engagement.
* Formatted to be more concise.

| Section | Existing content in the current Policy | Proposed change & pg. number in the Draft revised policy |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Acknowledgement of Country | Acknowledgement of Country | Updated to approved Council version 2023, pg. 1 |
| Revision history table | Not included | Included, pg. 1 |
| Administrative changes clause | Not included | Included to allow for administrative changes without Council endorsement, pg. 1 |
| Review date | No content – broadly referred to in Section 1 | Specific date included pg. 1 |
| Introduction | Combined introduction and purpose‘What is the purpose of this policy?’ | Separate introduction and purpose, pg.3 and 4 |
|  |  | Inclusion of reference to the unique makeup of Yarra Ranges, pg. 3 |
| Purpose |  | Clarification of the purpose, pg.4 |
|  |  | Inclusion of commitment to gender equity, diversity and inclusion pg.4 |
| Scope | High level, broad scope. Addressed changes to the Local Government Act 2020 (the Act). | Inclusion of ‘Levels of responsibility’ table, highlighting specific roles from Contractors to Councillors, pg. 5 |
|  |  | Inclusion of reference to the policy as only one of many resources and support available to officers, pg. 5 |
| What is community engagement? | No specific definition | Inclusion of a clear definition specific use of ‘Community Engagement’ at Yarra Ranges, pg.. # aligned with the definition on pg. 5  |
|  | Levels of engagement (IAP2 spectrum) with examples of engagement tools. | Moved to the ‘How we engage’ section, pg. 12 |
|  | Reference to Section 223 of the Local Government Act 1989 | Moved to the ‘How we engage’ section, pg. 12 |
|  |  | Included other ways the community can have a say on Council matters and get involved. |
| How does community engagement contribute to Council decision-making? | Not included | Inclusion of clarification of the factors considered when making decisions, including community engagement. |
| Community engagement principles and commitments | The commitments are grouped under themes. The diagram includes additional themes, not reflected in the principles or commitments. | Removed the diagram.Broke the commitments into dot points for clarity, pg.8-9 |
|  |  | Incorporated feedback and lessons learnt into the commitments. |
| Why we engage? | Description of benefits of community engagement for Council and the community. | Content from this section is covered in other sections. ‘Why we engage’ removed. |
| Who we engage? | Includes a list of community groups and stakeholders that may be engaged with. | Renamed ‘Who Council will engage’, pg.11The list of suggested groups has been removed. |
|  |  | Highlighted additional barriers for consideration by officers, pg.11 |
|  |  | Additional information related to the Gender Equity Act 2020 and Gender Impact Assessments as they relate to community engagement, pg. 11 |
| When we engage? | Three lists of when we will, may and will not engage. | Renamed. The lists have been consolidated into two lists of **will and will not** engage.  |
|  |  | Any broad or unclear statements have been removed e.g. we will engage when ‘changing something’ |
|  |  | Inclusion of an overarching statement of ‘In situations when a project or issue meets criteria in both sections, the determining factor will be if there **is/ is not** a genuine opportunity for input to inform, change or influence a decision. |
| How we engage? | Outlined specific steps in community engagement planning. Based on industry standards they are widely available from other sources. | Renamed ‘How Council will engage’Removed the specific steps for planning engagement. These are captured in internal resources available for officers.  |
| Subsection:Deciding the level of engagement |  | Removed the example initiatives in the ‘Levels of engagement’ and updated the tools to be more reflective of current practice. Under the subtitle ‘Deciding the level of engagement’. |
| Subsection:Deciding the engagement approach | Not included | New subsection. Replaced the operational steps with the following information previously in the ‘What is engagement’ section: * descriptions of deliberative and participatory engagement
* determining the level of engagement
* reference to Section 223 process
 |
|  |  | Inclusion of a list of policies, processes or projects with requirements for legislated engagement and the type where relevant, pg.14 |
| Subsection:Deciding on the tools for engagement subsection. | Content within the ‘Design and Plan’ specific steps | New subsection. Expanding on the considerations for selecting engagement methods. Pg.14 |
| Subsection:What does consistency look like? | No content | New subsection. Reinforcing that while each engagement is unique, there are minimum requirements for officers to consider, to provide a consistent experience for the community. Pg.15 |
| Other Statutory consultation | Generic information. | Removed. Content updated and incorporated into the list under subsection ‘Selecting the engagement approach’,pg.13 |
| Charter of Human Rights | Reference to this legislation | Moved to new section, ‘Legislative context’, pg 16 |
| Protection of privacy | Reference to Council’s Privacy and Health Information Policy | Moved to new section ‘Other relevant Council policies’, pg. 13 |
| Informing the community of engagement outcomes | Content within the ‘Review and Respond’ specific steps  | New section, for clarity, pg. 16 |
| Evaluation and performance | Content within the ‘Review and Respond  | New section. A clear statement on commitment to continuous improvement in community engagement, pg.16 |
| Legislative context | No content | New section. Inclusion of more detail on the requirements for key strategic documents under the Act.pg. 16 |
|  |  | Inclusion of the Gender Equality Act 2020 |
|  |  | Inclusion of the Charter of Human Rights, previously a stand-alone section |
| Other relevant legislation | No content | New section, including a list of other relevant legislation, pg. 17 |
| Relationship with Council Plan  | No content | Inclusion of the connection between Council’s key strategic document, the Council Plan and community engagement.pg. 17 |
| Other relevant Council policies | No content | Inclusion of Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy and Privacy and Health Information Policy, under this heading pg.18 |
| Definitions |  | Removed definitions for words not in the Policy. Updated to reflect concepts in the Policy, pg.18 |
| Appendix 1 | No content. | Details for community engagement on Proposing a local law and Leases as per the Act, pg. 20 |