

1 Preamble

1.1 Background

- 1.1.1. Community engagement, critical in the successful development of sustainable policies and decisions in government, the private sector and the community, is also critical in the ongoing planning, implementation, evaluation and decision making processes of Council services and the management of community resources.
- 1.1.2. Community consultation supports our Value of Engaging with, developing and recognising the valuable contribution of members of our community to the well-being of our City.¹

1.2 Purpose

- 1.2.1. The objectives of this Policy are to:
- a. Promote positive relations between the Council and the community.
 - b. Guide effective engagement between the Council and the community.
 - c. Enable the community to be informed about and participate in Council planning and decision making.
 - d. Provide the framework for appropriately structured, targeted and delivered community engagement as part of Council's decision making.
 - e. Support Council decision making which is open, transparent, responsive, inclusive and accountable to the community.

1.3 Scope

- 1.3.1. This Policy applies to Elected Members, employees, contractors and agents or consultants acting on behalf of Council.

1.4 Definitions

- 1.4.1. **Act** means the Local Government Act 1999.
- 1.4.2. **Community** means all people who, own property, live, work, study or conduct business in, or who visit, use or enjoy the services, facilities and public places of the City of Holdfast Bay.
- 1.4.3. **Community Engagement** means the community in decision making processes, which is critical in the successful development of acceptable policies and decisions in government, the private sector and the community.
- 1.4.4. **Consultation** means two way communications designed to obtain public feedback about ideas on rationale, alternatives and proposals to inform decision making.
- 1.4.5. **Council** means the City of Holdfast Bay.
- 1.4.6. **Policy** means this Community Consultation & Engagement Policy
- 1.4.7. **Regulations** means the Local Government (General) Regulations 2000.

2 Policy Statement

- 2.1.1. The City of Holdfast Bay is committed to effective, ongoing and timely community engagement as an integral part of local governance and key decision making.
- 2.1.2. Council will be proactive in informing and seeking the views of its community, taking into account the specific needs of different sections of the community, ensuring

¹ Source: City of Holdfast Bay Strategic Plan 2009 -2014, Our City – Our Future

appropriate strategies are developed to maximise the opportunities for participation of all members of the community..

- 2.1.3. Council will be honest about the degree of influence the community is able to exercise in any particular community engagement event or process.
- a. Council acknowledges that different sections of the community will have different levels of interest in an individual issue and will tailor its engagement strategies accordingly.
 - b. Council's desire to engage the community will be balanced with other influences such as budgetary constraints.
 - c. Council will define the parameters of the community engagement process for each specific topic, in line with legislative requirements and best practice, and will use community engagement techniques selected to fulfil the "promise" of the defined engagement process.
- 2.1.4. The City of Holdfast Bay will incorporate the principles of the International Association for Public Participation (IAP2) in all of its community engagement practices, both in those areas affected by legislation and in those areas where employees or Council have determined, as a matter of good practice, to consult with the community².
- 2.1.5. For the purpose of this policy the following promises apply:
- a. Inform – One way communication providing balanced and objective information to assist understanding about something that is going to happen
 - b. Consult – two way communications designed to obtain public feedback about ideas on rationale, alternatives and proposals to inform decision making – Council will listen and acknowledge concerns and aspirations and provide feedback.
 - c. Involve – participatory process designed to help identify issues and views to ensure that concerns and aspirations are understood and considered prior to decision making – Council will work with the community to ensure that its concerns and aspirations are directly reflected in the alternatives developed.
 - d. Collaborate – working together to develop understanding of all issues and interests to work out alternatives and identify preferred solutions – Council will look to the community for direct advice and innovation in formulating solutions.
- 2.1.6. Where required by the Local Government Act, or any other Act, Council will at all times meet **at least** the minimum requirements for public consultation as identified in the Act being: (*see the Community Consultation & Engagement Procedure for more details on minimum requirements*)
- 2.1.7. The publication in a newspaper circulating within the area of the council a notice describing the matter under consideration and inviting interested persons to make submissions in relation to the matter within a period stated in the notice. This period must be consistent with at least the minimum period of time as stated in the relevant section of the Act;
- a. For the purposes of determining the period of public consultation, the time between the 15 December and the 15 January inclusive in any year, will not be counted when determining the consultation period; and
- 2.1.8. The consideration by Council of any submissions made in response to an invitation to make a submission.

² See the *Community Consultation & Engagement Procedure for more details on areas where consultation is required.*

3 References

3.1 Legislation

3.1.1. Local Government Act 1999

3.2 Other References

3.2.1. Local Government Association (SA) Community Engagement Handbook – a Model Framework for Leading Practice in Local Government in South Australia. (2008)