



1.0 Purpose

The Community Engagement Policy (Policy) sets out Canterbury-Bankstown-Council's (Council) position on engagement with the community.

The Policy aims to ensure that community engagement is integrated into Council activities to support decision-making, strengthen communities and build relationships.

2.0 Scope

This Policy applies to all Council officials, including Councillors, and other workers (contractors, students gaining work experience or volunteers) undertaking community engagement on behalf of Council.

This Policy is to be read in conjunction with Council's Community Engagement Framework and Community Engagement Toolkit.

3.0 Terms and Definitions

Community Engagement	The involvement of the community in the decision-making process of Council, where the community is encouraged to provide feedback on a range of issues that effect them and inform Council's initiatives.
International Association for Public Participation (IAP2)	IAP2 is an international association which seeks to promote and improve the practice of public participation or community engagement, incorporating individuals, governments, institutions and other entities that affect the public interest throughout the world.

4.0 Policy Statement

Canterbury-Bankstown Council is committed to better decision-making through engagement that is values-based and goal-driven. Council fosters community engagement that is timely, appropriate, transparent, representative and builds capacity to develop an ongoing community-Council relationship that is based on trust and accountability.

Council acknowledges the significant demographic and geographic diversity of its Local Government Area, and is committed to ensuring residents, business owners and other stakeholders are informed and have opportunities to contribute to shaping Council projects, policies and plans.

This Policy is aligned to the *Leading and Engaged* destination of the CBCity 2028 Community Strategic Plan.

5.0 Policy Criteria

The following criteria capture Council's commitment to effective and informed engagement with the community:

5.1 Principles Guiding Community Engagement

Council's overarching engagement approach is guided by the social justice principles of equity, access, participation and rights.

Council's approach to engagement is also underpinned by a set of principles that define what members of the community should reasonably expect from Council when it is engaging on its projects, policies or plans. These principles are integrated into the planning, design and delivery of Council's engagement processes:



- **Flexible** – Council’s engagement provides members of the community with multiple opportunities to get involved, in ways that are socially and culturally appropriate. Engagement is also designed and delivered by a range of teams from within Council, drawing on existing networks and relationships. There is no “one size fits all” approach.
- **Respectful** – Council’s engagement is respectful of the diverse views in our community and the many ways people like to be engaged. Council acknowledges people’s input by reporting back on how their views may have informed Council decisions. Council will protect the safety of its stakeholders and staff at all times.
- **Credible** – Council is open, honest and transparent when engaging with stakeholders. Council’s engagement is based on a foundation of authenticity and an evidence-based understanding of community’s needs and preferences.
- **Collaborative** – Council’s engagement is a joint effort across Council teams and between Council and community, which means building relationships with stakeholders, including hard-to-reach groups, and keeping them involved in activities.
- **Consistent** – engagement is the business of everyone in Council and is delivered by many people across our organisation. Engagement should be delivered in a planned and consistent way, in line with Council’s Community Engagement Framework.
- **Educational** – Council’s engagement is supported by tools, processes and expertise that enhance the skills of Council staff and build the capacity of community members and other stakeholders to engage.
- **Embedded** – engagement underpins all of Council’s strategic and operational work that is likely to impact on stakeholders and communities from its overarching annual Operational Plan to specific projects, policies and plans.
- **Evaluated** – Council’s engagement processes will be reviewed, measured and refined in response to feedback from the community.

Council’s community engagement principles are based on the International Association for Public Participation’s (IAP2).

5.2 When to undertake Community Engagement

Council will undertake or contribute to community engagement at any time an upcoming decision or project, policy or plan is likely to have an impact on the community. The level of engagement is determined by:

- Level of impact, be it positive or adverse;
- How much quality data exists to convey community views on the topic;
- Community appetite for engagement (with consideration for ‘consultation fatigue’).

A number of situations may also trigger engagement by Council, including (but not limited to):

1. In response to issues raised and/or engagement initiated by the community;
2. Where proposed changes are likely to impact on the community, including service and program planning, development, project delivery or policy change;
3. In planning the strategic direction of Council; and/or
4. When required by law, policy or agreement with a government agency or statutory body.



5.3 How to Undertake Community Engagement

Following the identification of the primary purpose and potential for community impact, the relevant team/s within Council will determine the most appropriate engagement tools and activities. These will be based on IAP2 practices and put the specific cultural, economic, and social needs of the community at the centre.

Engagement can take many forms and range from informing stakeholders about a project, policy or plan, to obtaining input and feedback, or including stakeholders in decision-making.

Council will undertake engagement with consideration to the IAP2 Spectrum of Public Participation, which is represented in the table below. Levels of participation run from inform to empower and are determined by:

- An analysis of the objectives of the engagement process;
- The level of impact the decisions being made are likely to have on members of the community;
- The levels of interest and influence on the decision to be made;
- The resources, budget and timeframes dedicated to engagement.

Increasing impact on the decision

	Inform	Consult	Involve	Collaborate	Empower
Public participation goal	To provide the public with balanced, objective information to assist them in understanding the problems, alternatives 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 issues and concerns 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
Promise to the public	We will keep you informed	We will keep you informed, listen to and acknowledge concerns and aspirations, and provide feedback on how public input influenced the decision	We will work with you to ensure that your concerns and aspirations are directly reflected in the alternatives developed, and provide feedback on how public input influenced the decision	We will look to you for advice and innovation in formulating solutions and incorporate your advice and recommendations into the decisions to the maximum extent possible	We will implement what you decide

IAP2 Spectrum of Public Participation

5.4 Requirements for Reporting and Evaluation

Council will inform the community on how its feedback has influenced a decision or project, policy or plan throughout the decision-making process, including reporting on community engagement outcomes. The community will have access to a summary of engagement, available through an outcome report. This report will be made available to the community online, and where possible, translated in other languages.

Council will also evaluate the effectiveness of its engagement processes and continuously improve its activities by using these evaluation data.



5.5 Legislative Compliance

Council is committed to acting in accordance with its legislative obligations and will ensure accurate records are maintained and managed according to Council's Corporate Information Management Policy, and the *State Records Act 1998 (NSW)*.

Additionally, Council will take all reasonable steps to protect the privacy of those partaking in community engagement activities in line with Council's Access to Information Policy and Privacy Management Plan, and the *Privacy and Personal Information Protection Act 1998 (NSW)*.

6.0 Approval and Review

6.1 Policy Owner

Manager City Business and Engagement

6.2 Authorisation

Adopted by Canterbury-Bankstown Council on 30/04/2019.

6.3 Reviews and Modifications

The next review is due on 26/04/2025.

Review Date	Modification	Approved by
26/04/2022	Minor updates to policy content.	Director City Future

7.0 Related Documents

7.1 Laws and Standards

- *Local Government Act 1993 (NSW)*
- *State Records Act 1998*
- *Government Information (Public Access) Act 2009*
- *Privacy and Personal Information Protection Act 1998*

7.2 Policies and Procedures

- Community Engagement Framework
- Community Engagement Toolkit
- Community Participation Plan
- Access to Information Policy
- Corporate Information Management Policy
- Privacy Management Plan