APPENDIX 1

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Community Engagement Policy

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Purpose

The purpose of the Community Engagement Policy is to outline Council's commitment to engaging with East Gippsland's many communities and stakeholders in a way that is purposeful, representative, and easy to be involved in.

A set of evidence-based principles describe how Council will fulfill its commitment to creating genuine and transparent opportunities to enable community members affected by or interested in a decision to be involved in Council's decision-making process.

Underpinning the policy is the belief that effective community engagement provides the foundation for good decision-making, and is mutually beneficial to Council, the community, and stakeholders.

This Policy:

- outlines the evidence-based principles that guide community engagement in East Gippsland Shire
- sets out why, how, with whom and when community engagement is undertaken by Council staff, and the role of the community and stakeholders in these processes
- outlines a community engagement approach based on industry standards that emphasises the importance of planning, as well as sharing information along the way, and reporting back to community.

Scope

The Community Engagement Policy has been developed to ensure that members of the East Gippsland Shire community and stakeholders have genuine and transparent opportunities to participate in community engagement about matters that affect them, and to provide feedback that is taken into account by Council when making a decision.

East Gippsland Shire Council defines community engagement as a purposeful, planned process where those affected by or interested in a decision can participate in the decision-making process if they choose to.

In some instances, community engagement may be as simple as asking for feedback after an event and at other times it may involve in-depth discussions to help develop and decide on solutions to challenging issues. Community engagement is also about the community initiating conversations about things that matter to them and having open and honest interactions with Council.

This policy applies to Councillors, all Council officers, volunteers, consultants and contractors associated with Council and should be used to inform all stages of a community engagement process.

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Policy Context

There are several pieces of Victorian legislation that describe when Councils must engage with their communities. These include:

The Victorian Local Government Act 2020

The Victorian Local Government Act 2020 is a principles-based act and states that the role of a Council is to provide good governance in its municipal district for the benefit and wellbeing of the municipal community.

In performing this role Council must give effect to the overarching governance principles that require lawful and transparent decision making that prioritises achieving the best outcomes for the local community, including future generations. The economic, social, and environmental sustainability of the local community is to be promoted; innovation and continuous improvement pursued; and collaboration across all levels of government sought.

The Victorian Local Government Act 2020 outlines a set of five overarching principles of Community Engagement; Strategic Planning; Financial Management; Public Transparency; and Service Performance that are central to community engagement for East Gippsland Shire Council. The principles broadly outline the need for community engagement to be transparent, accountable, meaningful, informed, and representative. See **Appendix 1**: The Victorian Local Government Act 2020 Overarching Governance and Supporting Principles.

Specifically, the Community Engagement Principles seek to better engage the community to achieve long-term and sustainable outcomes, processes, relationships, discourse, decision-making, or implementation. To be successful, community engagement must encompass strategies and processes that are sensitive to the community-context in which it occurs.

Council must also engage the community in strategic planning and strategic decision making, and in doing so, consider the diverse needs of the local community. Within this context, strategic planning and strategic decision making relates to the long-term community vision, the four-year council plan, budget, financial plan, asset plan and the making of local laws. See **Appendix 2**: Victorian Local Government Act 2020 Requirements for Community Engagement.

The Victorian Planning and Environment Act (1987)

Describes the procedures for preparing and amending planning schemes, obtaining permits under planning schemes, enforcing compliance with planning schemes, and other administrative procedures. As part of this, the Act sets the overarching notification requirements, however, in some instances planning scheme amendments and planning permit applications may be exempt from the notification requirements.

The Victorian Public Health and Wellbeing Act (2008)

Outlines ways in which local councils are expected to plan for the health and wellbeing of their communities. Under section 26(2)(c) a Municipal Public Health and Wellbeing Plan must provide for the involvement of people in the local community in the development, implementation and evaluation of the public health and wellbeing plan.

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The Victorian Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities Act (2006)

The Victorian Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities Act 2006 is about the relationship between government and the people it serves, and sets out the basic rights, freedoms, and responsibilities of all people in Victoria. The Victorian Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities Act 2006 enshrines the human right to take part in public life, stating that "every person has the right to take part in public life, such as the right to vote or run for public office."

Other relevant Victorian legislation includes:

- Public Administration Act 2004
- Equal Opportunity Act 2010
- Child Safety Act 2015
- Road Management Act 2004
- Commission for Children and Young People Child Safe Standards.

Policy Statement

East Gippsland Shire Council is committed to providing genuine and transparent opportunities for the community to participate in purposeful and planned community engagement processes to inform Councils planning and decision-making processes that affect, impact, or interest them.

Objectives

The objectives of the policy are to:

- Promote a consistent approach to community engagement that is integrated into Council activities to inform decision making, build relationships and strengthen communities
- Realise sustainable outcomes that benefit the community and reflect their input in fair and inclusive planning and decision-making processes
- Strengthen relationships and trust between Council, the community and stakeholders through collaborations, partnerships, and new ways to involve and empower the community.

Principles

The Community Engagement Principles are designed to guide East Gippsland Shire Council through all stages of a community engagement process. The principles are informed by best-practice community engagement frameworks including the International Association for Public Participation (IAP2) Core Values for the Practice of Public Participation, the Victorian Auditor General's Office (VAGO) Public Participation Principles and the principles outlined in the Victorian Local Government Act 2020 as shown in Table 1.

Principle	Practice
Representative	• We identify the stakeholders and groups interested in or affected by the issue that is the focus of the community engagement and ensure they can participate if they choose to. • We consider the needs and interests of the community and stakeholders in the decision-making process.

Principle	Practice
Respectful	• We value all people and respect the views, knowledge, expertise and lived experiences of those engaged with, acknowledging that everyone has different views and needs. • We undertake engagement in a mutually respectful manner.
Transparent	• We ensure our community engagement processes have a clearly defined objective and scope that is shared with the community and stakeholders to inform their participation. • We inform participants of the ways in which the community engagement process will influence Council decision making.
Accessible	• We use a variety of online, plain English print and face-to-face methods to maximise our reach and remove potential barriers. • We ensure multiple and varied opportunities are provided to participate that are sensitive to the local-community context and diversity of individual needs, including those underrepresented or considered hard to reach.
Meaningful	• We ensure participants have access to objective, relevant and timely information to inform their participation and input into planning and decision-making processes.
Support	• We ensure participants are provided with appropriate support to enable meaningful and informed engagement. We recognise that one size does not fit all. We tailor support to the community engagement process, reflective of the needs of the participants and to remove the barriers to participation such as the cost of travel.
Accountable	• We plan, resource and report on our engagement processes appropriately explaining what we asked, what we heard, and the action we took. • We review and evaluate the effectiveness of the community engagement to continually improve the processes and outcomes.
Capable	• We ensure Council Officers and decision makers responsible for community engagement processes are provided with appropriate training, support, and resources.

Table 1: Community Engagement Principles

Why we engage

Effective engagement strengthens Councils decision-making by facilitating a greater understanding of the needs, aspirations, concerns, and ideas of the community, which is essential to the planning and delivery of services.

Drawing on a diverse range of perspectives contributes to more sustainable decisions, with greater ownership and belonging experienced amongst the community. Effective community engagement also plays an important part in building respectful relationships by ensuring transparency, integrity, and trust in Council processes.

Other benefits include:

- Increased community involvement
- A better-informed community
- A stronger evidence base to inform decisions advocacy
- Greater mutual understanding between Council and the community
- Strengthened community networks and resilience
- Shared ownership of opportunities and challenges benefiting/impacting both the community and Council
- Improved service planning and delivery.

When we engage

Engagement should happen early in the planning stage for any changes to or introduction of new, services, facilities, policies or local laws that impact our community, including the long-term community vision, the four-year council plan, budget, financial plan, asset plan.

Community / Stakeholder engagement may need to occur at several stages in the lead up to final plans or decisions. The greater the impact on the community, the more interactive the engagement will be. Where necessary technical research and feasibility of options will be conducted before seeking community input to ensure the community is appropriately informed.

Who we engage

East Gippsland Shire Councils plans, projects, policies, services, and operations are connected to the day-to-day lives of community members and stakeholders across the whole municipality. Decisions are greatly improved when they are informed by an understanding of the needs, aspirations, concerns, and ideas of individuals and groups within our community.

As part of our planning for community engagement we identify the people and groups interested in or affected by the issue that is the focus of the community engagement and utilise methods to ensure they can participate if they choose to. Through our engagement we seek to connect with the diversity of the community and stakeholders to create fair and inclusive, representative engagement processes.

East Gippsland Shire Council's place-based community plans include a detailed community profile of the people living in the local community drawing on demographic data and community feedback, that provides insight into the people that live in the district and what is important to them. These community profiles will be used as the basis for identifying the community members and stakeholder groups interested in or affected by the issue being considered through the community engagement.

Where a place-based community plan does not exist the local characteristics of the community, demographic data, and other available information should be considered to enable the identification of community and stakeholder groups to be included in the engagement process.

Table 2 provides a snapshot of the community and stakeholder groups in East Gippsland Shire that may be relevant to a community engagement process.

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A Snapshot of the Community and Stakeholder Groups		
Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander People (including Traditional Owners)	Arts and culture community	Business and industry groups, investors
Chambers of commerce	Children	Carers
Commuters	Community service providers	Communities of interest groups
Culturally and linguistically diverse groups	East Gippsland Shire Council employees	Emergency services
Environmental groups	Families	General community
Government departments /agencies	Heritage groups	Lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and intersex community
State and Federal MPs	Locality groups	Mayor and Councillors
Media	Neighbouring councils or other local government organisations	Not-for-profit organisations and groups
Older people and groups	Peak bodies	People with a disability
People experiencing homelessness	Private enterprise	Ratepayers
Residents	Service groups	Schools, education facilities and students
Sporting, leisure and recreational clubs and groups	Students	Unincorporated associations and clubs
Victorian and Australian government agencies	Visitors	Young People

Table 2: A Snapshot of Community Stakeholder Groups

How we engage

East Gippsland Shire Council has adapted the International Association for Public Participation (IAP2) Spectrum of Public Participation which describes five levels of engagement. The spectrum matches the role of the community with the level of influence they can expect and will help tailor the way we engage with the community.

Deliberative engagement practices

Best practice community engagement reflects a shift towards more collaborative ways of working with the community and stakeholders as an effective way to identify new solutions for some of the most complex problems we face, to improve policy outcomes and build trust between the community, stakeholders and Council. The emphasis in these types of processes is on collective learning and understanding, as much as the exchange of information.

One of the key developments relates to the use of the deliberative engagement practices in Councils strategic planning and strategic decision-making processes by the Victorian Local

Government Act 2020 and for Councils forming decisions with the community for rate increases above the CPI cap by the Victorian Essential Services Commission requirements.

Deliberative engagement is a distinctive approach to involving people in decision-making. It is different from other forms of engagement in that it is about giving a group of everyday people time to consider and discuss an issue in depth before they come to a considered view. They are exposed to relevant facts from multiple points of view, identify options, and come to a group decision. The deliberative group is randomly selected through an independent process that ensures they are descriptively representative of the demographics of the general population.

In many ways East Gippsland Shire Councils approach to place based planning and a range of plans such as concept plans, marine and coastal plans as examples, reflects the elements of deliberative engagement where the process of creating local community plans focused on building relationships and trust between community members and groups, Council and other key agencies. Ideas identified by the community were prioritised based on the evidence gathered around the issues, challenges and opportunities within the district that reflected diverse perspectives and enabled participants to develop new views and come to an informed decision together.

According to the Victorian Local Government Act 2020 Community Engagement Principles, the intent of the Act is to encourage positive and productive community engagement, by assisting Councils to build capacity in deliberative engagement so that this way of working with the community becomes standard practice, rather than an exceptional exercise. As reflected in East Gippsland Shire Council's commitment to community and strategic planning and the co-design process utilised aligns with this intent.

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Table 3 describes the five levels of Councils spectrum of engagement including the roles of Council and community and some example methods for each type of engagement including deliberative engagement.

	Inform	Consult	Involve	Collaborate	Empower
Our Goal	To provide balanced and objective information to make our community aware of something that has happened or will happen	To listen to our community's feedback on ideas, alternatives, and proposals to inform our decision making	To seek input to identify issues, concerns, and aspirations to inform decision making and show how that input has informed the decision	To work with our community to develop a detailed understanding of all the issues and opportunities and identify agreed solutions at every step of the process	To build the capacity of our community to identify solutions and/or lead change
Our promise to the community	We will keep you informed	We will listen to and acknowledge your concerns	We will work with you to exchange information, ideas, and concerns	We will seek advice and innovation from amongst the various stakeholder groups	We will work with you to identify options that will influence the final decision
Role of community and/or stakeholders	Listen	Contribute	Participate	Partner	Lead
Examples of Methods	Signs Advertisements Fact sheets Newsletter Public Notices Social media Websites	Focus groups Public exhibition Surveys (online and hard copy) Ideas boards Creative projects Online pin dropping map tools Face-to-face interviews and discussions	Workshops • Community panels • Advisory groups • Online forums • Co designing • Detailed online mapping, ranking and prioritising tools • Regularly reporting back to the community across multiple stages of engagement • Elements of deliberative engagement processes		Independently governed reference groups Citizens juries Representative deliberative panels Deliberative budgeting

Table 3: East Gippsland Shire Councils Spectrum of Engagement

The process of community engagement is a dynamic one which means there is likely to be movement back and forth through the different levels of the spectrum as an engagement process is implemented. This is because the community can have different levels of influence at different stages of the project or decision-making process and different groups within the community may be more directly impacted than others.

As elected representatives on behalf of the community, final decisions ultimately rest with the elected Councillors.

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Every project or decision will vary according to its context, who it affects and how it impacts them, combined with what can be influenced or is achievable. Successful engagement is underpinned by careful planning to ensure each project is assessed accordingly.

Figure1 shows examples of how different types of engagement may align with influence.

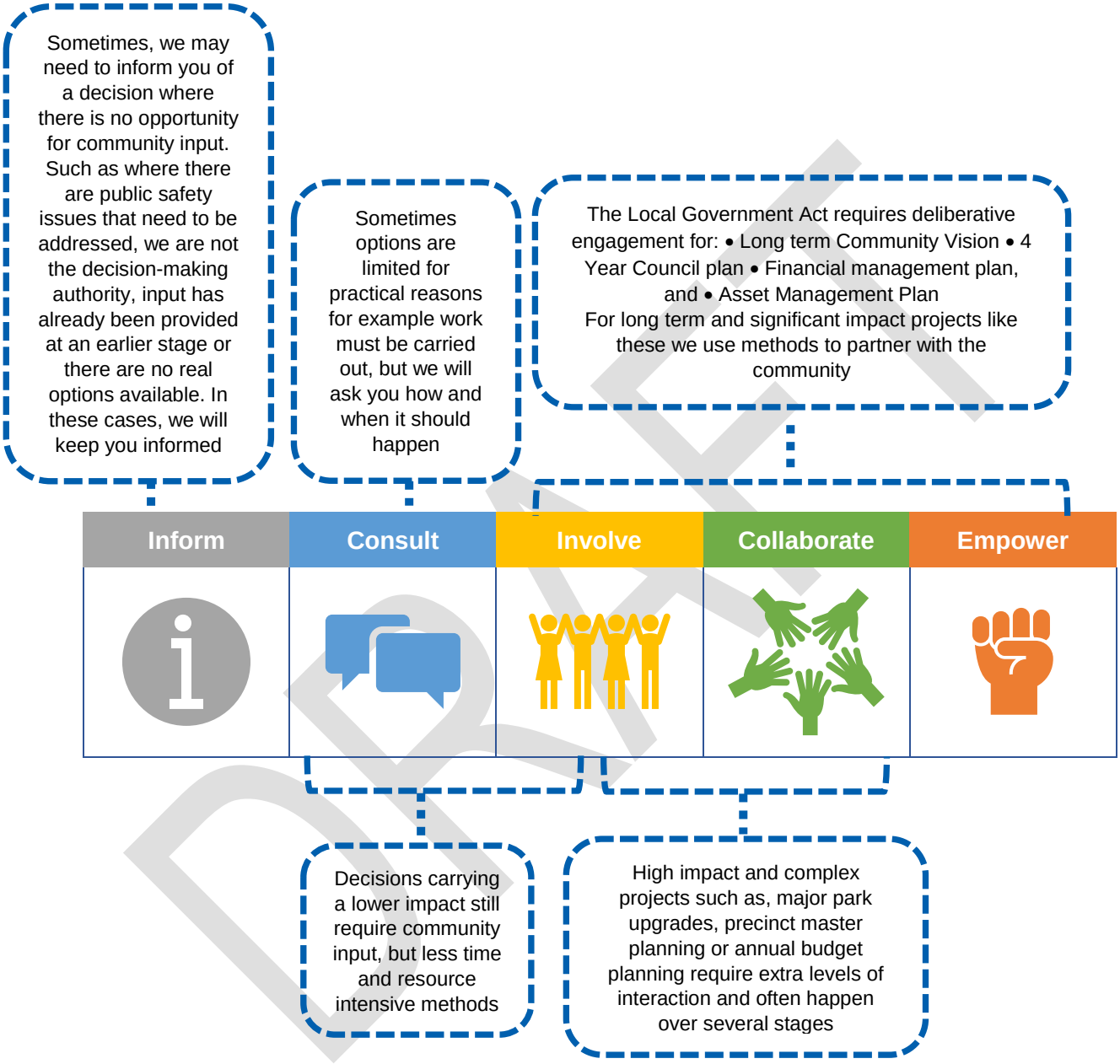

Figure 1: Relationship between levels of engagement and influence

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Approach to community engagement

The design of a community engagement plan will ensure appropriate timing, resources, and methods according to a considered analysis of those affected, impacted, or interested, and the scope and objective of any engagement project.

Evaluation will ensure Council is able to continuously improve our community engagement that is reflective of best practice by responding to the complex, evolving needs, and expectations of all stakeholders.

Figure 2 outlines our approach to purposeful, planned community engagement, adapted from the IAP2 engagement framework, and shows four interconnected elements of design, plan, do and review.

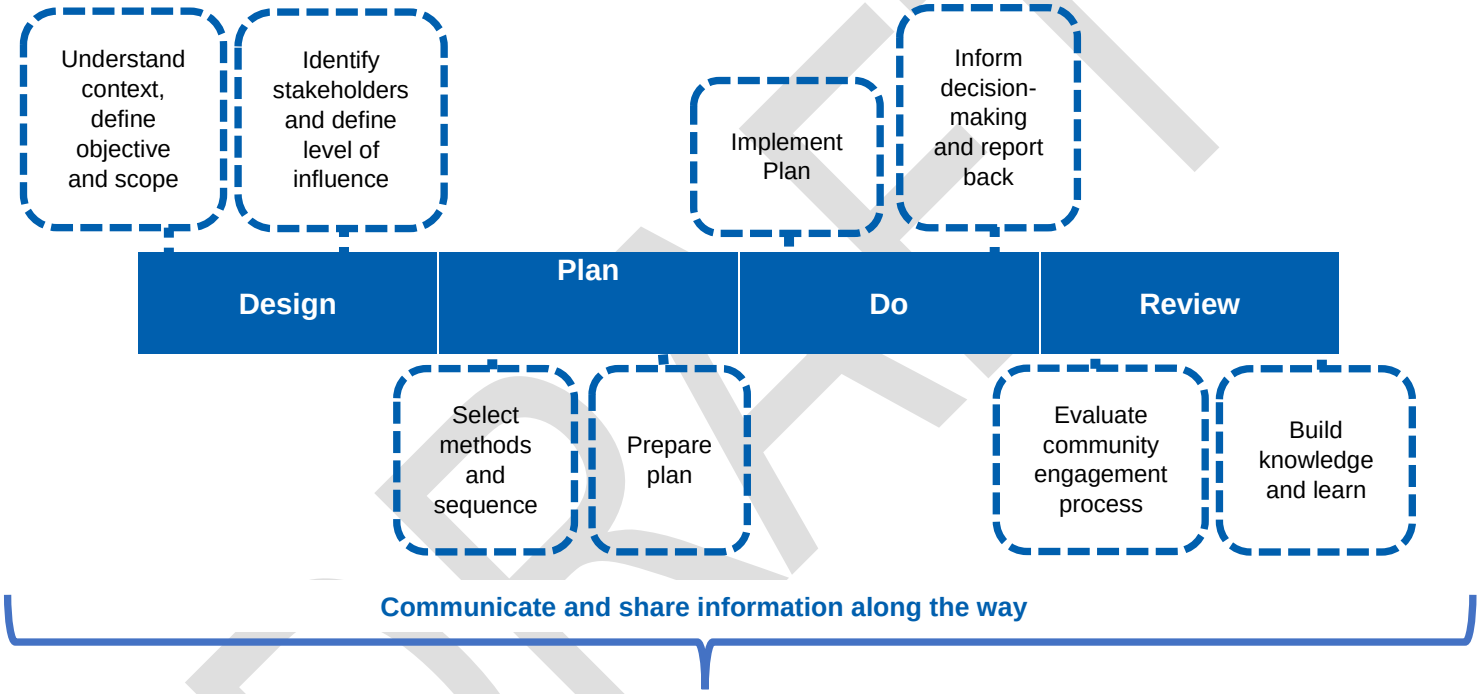

Figure 2: Approach to community engagement

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Roles and Responsibilities

These management positions are responsible for the implementation, communication, and compliance monitoring of the policy in their work areas:

Party / Parties	Roles and Responsibilities
Executive Leadership Team	To ensure all Managers are aware of their responsibilities and comply with the Policy.
Managers	To ensure all staff, contractors, volunteers, and service providers / service partners are aware of their responsibilities and comply with this Policy.
Coordinators	To support staff with the implementation of the community engagement plans for relevant projects.
All staff	To ensure engagement they are responsible for (including engagement undertaken by third parties on Council's behalf) complies with this policy.

References and Supporting Documents

Applicable Legislation:

- The Victorian Local Government Act 2020
- The Victorian Planning and Environment Act (1987)
- The Victorian Public Health and Wellbeing Act (2008)
- The Victorian Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities Act 2006
- The Victorian Public Administration Act 2004
- The Victorian Equal Opportunity Act 2010
- The Victorian Child Safety Act 2015
- The Victorian Road Management Act 2004
- The Victorian Commission for Children and Young People Child Safe Standards

Applicable Policy and Procedure:

- Social Media and Media Relations policy
- Policies for email, internet, digital equipment, electronic communications
- Code of Conduct
- Information Services and Communications policies
- Privacy and Personal Information Policy
- Customer Response Policy
- Information Privacy Policy

Supporting Documents:

- Essential Services Commission, 2017, Deliberation at Scale, Principles and Practices for Small Rural Councils, https://www.esc.vic.gov.au/sites/default/files/documents/lg-fgrs-kja-engagement-toolkit-deliberation-at-scale-20180104_v3.pdf, viewed July 2020
- Involve and the National Consumer Centre UK, 2008, Deliberative public engagement: nine principles, https://www.involve.org.uk/resources/publications/practical-guidance/deliberative-public-engagement-nine-principles, viewed July 2020

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- Mosaic Lab, 2020, A Short Guide to Deliberation For Victorian Councils, https://www.mosaiclab.com.au/deliberation-victorian-councils, viewed July 2020
- National Coordinating Centre for Engagement, UK, 2017, How to Facilitate Deliberative Engagement, https://www.publicengagement.ac.uk/sites/default/files/publication/how_to_facilitate_deliberative_engagement.pdf, viewed July 2020
- IAP2 (International Association for Public Participation) 2020, IAP2 Published resources – spectrum and quality assurance webpage, https://www.iap2.org.au/Resources/IAP2-PublishedResources, viewed July 2020
- Victorian Auditor-General, 2017 Public Participation and Community Engagement: Local Government Sector. Victorian Government: Melbourne, https://www.parliament.vic.gov.au/file_uploads/VAGO_PP-Local-Gov_qQN5QyHk.pdf viewed July 2020.

Privacy and Human Rights Consideration

All personal information collected by East Gippsland Shire Council through community engagement will be handled in accordance with all applicable privacy legislation and will be used only for the issue that is the subject of the community engagement

All matters relevant to the Victorian Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities Act 2006 have been considered in the preparation of this Policy and are consistent with the standards set by the Charter. The Community Engagement Policy will ensure that stakeholders across East Gippsland Shire have an opportunity to participate in public life and inform decision making, consistent with Section 18 of the Charter.

Definitions

Term	Meaning
Community Engagement	A purposeful, planned process where those affected by or interested in a decision can participate in the decision-making process if they choose to.
Community	• People who live in East Gippsland • People and organisations who are ratepayers in East Gippsland; and • People and organisations who conduct activities in East Gippsland • Community of place (based on geographic location sch as those reflected in local district pans) • Community of practice (based on common interests and activities such conservation, the environment, bike-riding) • Community of identity (based on an individual shared perspective such as particular age groups or a religious community).
Citizens juries	The most common form of deliberation practiced in Australia is a citizens' jury. Citizens' juries are also called community panels, people's panels, or citizens' assemblies. They can comprise any number of people, and examples around the world vary from 12 to 1,000 participants. Currently in Australia the deliberative group often consists of 30 to 45 people.

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Term	Meaning
Co-design	A partnership process that builds and deepens equal collaboration between stakeholders affected by, or attempting to, resolve a challenge. A key tenet of co-design is that stakeholders are acknowledged as the experts of their own experience, becoming central to the design process. On the spectrum of engagement this is a method for collaboration. Can also refer to the co-design of the engagement process itself to ensure it is fully transparent and works for all parties.
Collaborate	To work with our community to develop a detailed understanding of all the issues and opportunities and identify agreed solutions at every step of the process.
Consult	To listen to our community's feedback on ideas, alternatives, and proposals to inform our decision making
Contractor	Person or company engaged to undertake works for Council, including service providers / service partners.
Council	East Gippsland Shire Council.
Councillor	Person who has been elected to the office of "Councillor" of East Gippsland Shire Council.
Council officer	A current member of East Gippsland Shire Council staff with the authority to engage in activities on behalf of Council.
Decision	A conclusion or resolution reached after consideration. Decisions can take many forms. In this policy, it is used to include activities such as plans, projects, service design/delivery, and policy development.

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Term	Meaning
Deliberative Engagement	Deliberative engagement is a distinctive approach to involving people in decision-making. It is different from other forms of engagement in that it is about giving participants time to consider and discuss an issue in depth before they come to a considered view. Deliberation is one form of 'high influence' community engagement. The expectation is that the convening organisation will implement the recommendations to the greatest extent possible. However, it does not replace or take away from the decision-making powers of elected representatives. Deliberation is a principles-based approach to community engagement. Meeting the principles is more important than any specific method or format. The key elements of a deliberation are: • There is a complex problem or issue to be solved, often called a remit • A deliberating group is selected using a random and stratified recruitment method • Information from diverse sources and covering different sides of the issue, such as background reports and expert speakers, is provided • Information from diverse sources and covering different sides of the issue, such as background reports and expert speakers, is provided • The group is given 4-6 full days of deliberation time. This is usually spread over a number of weeks or months to facilitate learning and understanding • The process is designed and facilitated by independent skilled facilitators • The group considers information, identifies options, comes to judgement, writes their own recommendations/report, and presents it to the elected council.
Deliberative Elements	Used where time and resources required for a full deliberative exercise is incompatible with the level of impact a decision entails, but the impact is sufficiently high or the decision is sufficiently complex to still warrant an extra level of transparency, meaningfulness and representation. Examples of elements of deliberative practice include: • Inviting a representative sample of those impacted by a decision in to a one off workshop in order to hear the range of perspectives and share more detailed information (this would usually happen after a broader community consultation so the full range of perspectives and issues requiring compromise are fully understood) • Inviting the community to consider the trade-offs involved in a decision by presenting options, choices, or a budget framework • Offering information sessions and accessible explanations of the project scope where issues are complex or dependent on other factors • Inviting key stakeholders or a sample of those highly impacted to co-design the engagement process to ensure it reaches out to the right groups and is fully representative.
Empower	To build the capacity of our community to identify solutions and/or lead change.
Engagement approach	The design/plan that ensures appropriate timing, resources, and methods according to a considered analysis of those affected, impacted, or interested and the scope and remit of any engagement project.

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Term	Meaning
Hard to reach	Individuals and groups that are more difficult to involve in community engagement and have multiple barriers to engagement.
Inform	To provide balanced and objective information to make our community aware of something that has happened or will happen and/or to influence a decision.
Involve	To seek input to identify issues, concerns, and aspirations to inform decision making and show how that input has informed the decision.
Methods	Refers to the many types of engagement that can be employed such as online or in person, public meetings and community panels, surveys, ideas boards, public competitions, or deliberative budgeting for example.
Online pin dropping map tools	Software that enables issues to be pinned on a dynamic map and provides the community with multiple ways to have their say on the issues related to these specific geographic locations.
Partner	An individual, organisation or sector that forms a partnership to work with Council.
Partnership	Occurs when two or more people or organisations work together to realise or achieve a goal. Partnerships provide opportunities for mutual benefit and results beyond what any single individual, organisation or sector could realise alone.
Project	A planned undertaking that builds, enhances, and/or maintains Council assets or enhances Council services to achieve a desired outcome, within a defined scope.
Random selection	Random, stratified selection of participants is an independently conducted process, as far as possible, that provides as unbiased and representative cross section of the community as practical. This is an essential element of deliberative engagement, which is not about allowing anyone to turn up and people to 'self-select', like the participants at a public meeting. It allows you as council decision makers to have a high level of comfort, because you know what everyday people who are broadly representative of your community think is reasonable (once they are informed). This is more valuable than knowing only what interest groups and highly articulate and invested people are lobbying for.
Representative	Representative of the persons and groups affected by the matter that is the subject of the community engagement.
Representative Community Panel	• Can be used to deliver a range of engagement types from world café's, in person and/or online advisory groups through to complex deliberative processes. • Larger panels (50-60 participants) can provide a representative sample of the population (to acceptable industry standards) and can be appropriate for whole of municipality decisions with wide reaching impact. • Smaller panels (15-30 participants) can provide representative samples for niche decisions impacting groups of the community but still require appropriate support, time, and information.

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Term	Meaning
Responsible Officer	An officer of East Gippsland Shire Council who has responsibility for the general area/subject matter to which a record pertains.
Shire	The geographic area of East Gippsland Shire Council.
Staff	All staff engaged by East Gippsland Shire Council, including all full-time, part-time, and casual employees, labour hire agency staff, contractors, and volunteers.
Stakeholders	• Sections of the community involved in engagement because of impact, interest, or responsibility to deliver on an outcome • Can also refer to external organisations, and other levels of government involved in a decision • Always includes internal decision makers and implementers of decision outcomes.
Volunteer	Formally recognised, unpaid member of the public who assists with the provision of Council services e.g. Visitor Information Centre, Library

Revision History and Review

Version Control	Approved Amended Rescinded	Date Effective	Approved By	ECM Document Reference	Summary of Changes

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Appendices

Appendix 1 –Victorian Local Government Act 2020 Overarching Governance and Supporting Principles

The Act states that a Council must in the performance of its role give effect to the overarching governance principles as follows:

#	Overarching governance principles
a	Council decisions are to be made and actions taken in accordance with the relevant law
b	Priority is to be given to achieving the best outcomes for the municipal community, including future generations
c	The economic, social, and environmental sustainability of the municipal district, including mitigation and planning for climate change risks, is to be promoted
d	**The municipal community is to be engaged in strategic planning and strategic decision making**
e	Innovation and continuous improvement is to be pursued
f	Collaboration with other Councils and Governments and statutory bodies is to be sought
g	The ongoing financial viability of the Council is to be ensured
h	Regional, state and national plans and policies are to be taken into account in strategic planning and decision making
i	The transparency of Council decisions, actions and information is to be ensured.

Table 4: Overarching governance principles

In giving effect to the overarching governance principles, a Council must take into account the following supporting principles:

Principles	Aim
a) Community engagement	This principle aims to ensure all Victorians have the opportunity to engage with their council on the future of their community. At a minimum, all councils must adopt and maintain a community engagement policy which must be used in the development of: • planning and financial management • community vision • council plan • financial plan

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b)	Strategic planning	The Local Government Act 2020 requires councils to develop an integrated, longer-term, and transparent approach to planning that supports councillors in leading strategically, rather than focusing on operational issues. The strategic planning principle works together with the community engagement principle to ensure that communities are involved in strategic planning and decision making.
c)	Public transparency	Openness, accountability, and honesty are essential to build high levels of accountability and trust amongst citizens and enable fully informed engagement in the democratic process. Councils will be required to adopt and maintain a public transparency policy, which must be in line with underpinning principles in the Act.
d)	Financial management	A significant percentage of a council's revenue comes from rates, and the community has expectations that these rates will be used to deliver an array of services and infrastructure. It is vital that councils undertake responsible spending and investment that ensures financial, social and environmental sustainability. The new Local Government Act 2020 is also intended to create a legislative environment that embraces innovation, modern business practices and microeconomic reform.
e)	Service performance	This principle ensure that councils deliver services to the community that are equitable, accessible, good value and meet the needs of their diverse communities.

Table 5: Supporting principles

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Appendix 2 – The Victorian Local Government Act 2020 Requirements for Community Engagement

The Victorian Local Government Act 2020 does not define any type of community engagement that Councils must utilise; but it does require that, at a minimum, a council use deliberative engagement practices in developing certain documents and processes.

Table 6 below outlines where deliberative engagement practices are required and where the method of community engagement may be determined by Councils, in accordance with their community engagement policy.

In addition to these areas, the community engagement principles also suggest that many other council requirements, under the Act and other legislation, not included in Table 8 would benefit from councils considering the use of deliberative engagement activities.
The application of all principles within the Act is also required, where relevant, when applying deliberative engagement practices in the development of council plans, documents, policies, and procedures, including financial management, public transparency, strategic planning, and service performance principles.

Section	Policy application	Community engagement method to be determined by Council	Deliberative Engagement
55 (p70)	**Community Engagement Policy**	Adopt the first community engagement policy on or before 1 March 2021. A community engagement policy must be developed in consultation with the municipal community. Council may determine the method of community engagement undertaken in accordance with their existing community engagement policy.	
60 (p74)	**Governance Rules**	The first Governance rules must be in place prior to the 1 September 2020 deadline for the revised community engagement policy. Council may determine the most appropriate method of consultation in accordance with their existing community engagement policy. A Section 223 of the Local Government Act 1989 may be deemed the appropriate mechanism.	

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Section	Policy application	Community engagement method to be determined by Council	Deliberative Engagement
73 (p84)	**Proposing a local law**	The Council may determine the appropriate community engagement method in respect of the making of a local law, in accordance with their community engagement policy, and communicate the process in the public notice for the local law	
73 (p85)	**Altering a proposed local law**	If the Council proposes to alter a proposed local law, they must conduct further community engagement in respect of the proposed alteration	
88 (p94)	**Community Vision**		Develop or review the Community Vision in accordance with Councils deliberative engagement practices and adopt the Community Vision by 31 October in the year following a general election. The Community Vision has effect from 1 July in the year following a general election.
90 (p95)	**Council Plan**		Develop or review the Council Plan in accordance with its deliberative engagement practices and adopt the Council Plan by 31 October in the year following a general election.
91 (p96)	**Financial Plan**		Develop or review the Financial Plan in accordance with its deliberative engagement practices and adopt the Financial Plan by 31 October in the year following a general election.
92 (p97)	**Asset Plan**		Develop, adopt, and keep in force an Asset Plan in accordance with their community engagement policy and deliberative engagement practices by 30 June 2022

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Section	Policy application	Community engagement method to be determined by Council	Deliberative Engagement
96 (p100)	**Preparation of budget or revised budget**	Develop the budget and any revised budget in accordance with Councils community engagement policy. Council may determine the most appropriate method of consultation in accordance with their community engagement policy. The first budget may be developed under section 94 in accordance with section 223 of the Local Government Act 1989 if the Council has not adopted its first community engagement policy at the time that the budget is being developed	
112 (p.113)	**Acquisition and compensation**	Council may determine the most appropriate method of consultation in accordance with their community engagement policy	
114 (p.113)	**Restriction on power to sell or exchange land**	Council may determine the most appropriate method of consultation in accordance with their community engagement policy	
239 (p.218)	**Restructuring advisory panels**	Council may determine the most appropriate method of consultation in accordance with their community engagement policy	

Table 6: Local Government Act 2020 requirements for community engagement

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