TEMORA SHIRE COUNCIL

TEMORA
The Friendly Shire

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT STRATEGY

ACTIVE

Review Details

ABOUT THIS RELEASE

DOCUMENT NAME: **Community Engagement Strategy**
CODE NUMBER: **G36**
AUTHOR: **Temora Shire Council**
ENDORSEMENT DATE: **December 2024**

REVIEW

Revision Date	Revision Description		Date approved by Council	General Managers Endorsement
2021-2022	Community Engagement Strategy 2021-2022	1		
December 2024	Review	2	December 2024	MKB

PLANNED REVIEW

Planned Review Date	Revision Description		Review by
November 2026	Review		

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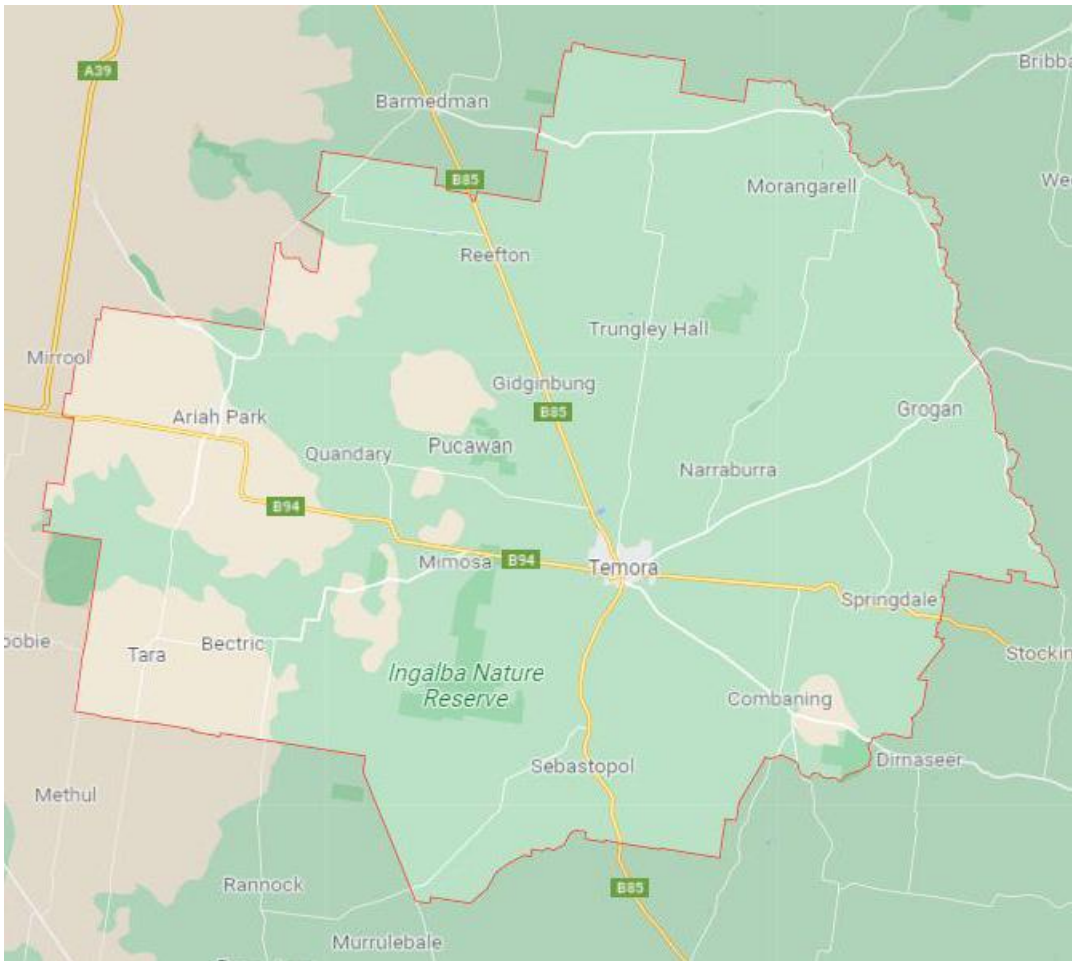
District Map



1. Introduction

Temora Shire Council values input from the wider community as it helps to ensure that the services, we provide are relevant, timely and of value.

A Community Engagement Strategy (CES) is a key component in meeting Council's legislative requirements for community participation under the *Local Government Act 1993* and *Environmental Planning and Assessment Act 1979*.

The legislation asks councils to actively engage with their local communities as a principle of good governance and recognises that community participation results in better outcomes.

This CES is a roadmap for creating and maintaining positive relationships and effective engagement with our community. It strives to embed best practice consultation across Council now and into the future.

The level that we engage with the community will vary substantially depending on the scale and scope of the project or plan.

Community, as referred to in the CES, includes anyone that is affected by the project or plan, and can include individuals, community groups, non-government organisations, New South Wales and Australian government bodies.

2. What is community engagement?

Community engagement, also known as 'public participation', is about involving people in decision making and it is at the very core of the democratic processes in local government.

2.1 Why is it appropriate?

Temora Shire Council recognises that people have a right to be informed and to have a say on projects that are important to them, or which have an impact on their daily lives. Community engagement provides Council with a better understanding of community views and values and helps us to make more informed decisions and deliver better services.

2.2 Why do we need a strategy?

The Community Engagement Strategy outlines our approach to engage with the community and stakeholders. It provides transparency and clarity for all stakeholders so they can understand their role in the decision-making process. The strategy outlines who, when and how we will engage on plans, policies, projects, and service delivery.

2.3 Legislative Requirements

Council must comply with a legislation that sets out when we must initiate consultation. Section 402A of the *Local Government Act 1993* requires council to: *establish and implement a strategy (called its community engagement strategy) for engagement with the local community when developing its plans, policies, and programs and for the purpose of determining its activities (other than routine administrative matters).*

2.4 This document sits alongside the Community Participation Plan

The *Environmental Planning and Assessment Act 1979* (EP&A Act) requires planning authorities to outline how and when the community will be engaged across planning functions like policy making and assessment. These requirements are outlined in our Community Participation Plan (CPP) which is available on Council's website ***temora.nsw.gov.au.***

Our Community Engagement Strategy (this document) has been developed in response to these requirements as well as those set out in the *Local Government Act 1993*. This strategy also covers non-planning matters.

3. Engagement Aims

Our community engagement aims:

Clarity of Purpose
We will clearly define why the engagement is occurring, its context, and what information we are seeking from the engagement activities.

Commitment
We will demonstrate commitment to establish and maintain credibility and accountability and provide safe opportunities for community voices to be heard.

Communication
We will establish a two-way process of providing accurate and timely information and demonstrate that feedback is valued and is being used to inform Council's planning and decision making. We will use plain English and a variety of tools to be effective in our communication.

Evidence
We will establish good engagement practices that are based on a sound research and quality information and support our community conversations with information and evidence.

Flexibility & Responsiveness
We will establish engagement plans that are flexible during the engagement process to ensure equitable access to the process for all.

Timeliness
We will ensure that interested community members and other stakeholders have information early about the opportunities that will be available for their engagement, as well as the duration of activities and when the outcome of those activities will be available.

Inclusive
We will ensure that a cross-section of the Temora Shire community is enabled to participate in each community engagement activity, and we will proactively engage those people whose voices are often not heard.

Collaboration
We will establish partnerships with relevant community groups, business and industry, State and Federal governments, our regional partners, and others to enable two-way communication, and timely and information engagement.

Continuous Improvement
We will establish and maintain processes that ensure Council learns from community engagement activities and is able to monitor and evaluate for future improvements.

3.1 Social justice principles

Our approach reflects the social justice principles of equity, access, participation, and rights.

- Better **understand** the needs of the community
- **Educate** the community and stakeholders about the potential issues that may impact Temora Shire over the next 10 years.
- Obtain **input** into a 10-year vison for the shire including future priorities, needs and aspirations.
- **Inform** the community and stakeholders (target audience) of the opportunities to participate in the development of plans, policies, and programs.
- **Engage** with a broad cross section of the community that is representative and inclusive of our demographics.
- **Create** collaborative partnerships with government agencies to ensure goals and strategies are inclusive of existing state and regional plans.
- **Meet** requirements of legislation, policies, and procedures

4. Roles & Responsibilities

Mayor
The mayor is to:

- Act as the spokesperson for the council to promote engagement on key strategic plans including developing the CSP (Community Strategic Plan).
- Together with the General Manager, ensure adequate opportunities and mechanisms for engagement between council and the local community.
- Promote partnerships between council and key stakeholders.

Mayor & Councillors
Elected representatives are to:

- Promote engagement on key strategic plans including supporting and participating in community engagement for the development of the CSP (Community Strategic Plan).
- Participate in the development of IP&R (Integrated Planning & Reporting) component documents, including the CSP.
- As members of the elected body, endorse the CSP on behalf of the community and approve the remaining component IP&R documents.

General Manager
The General Manager is to:

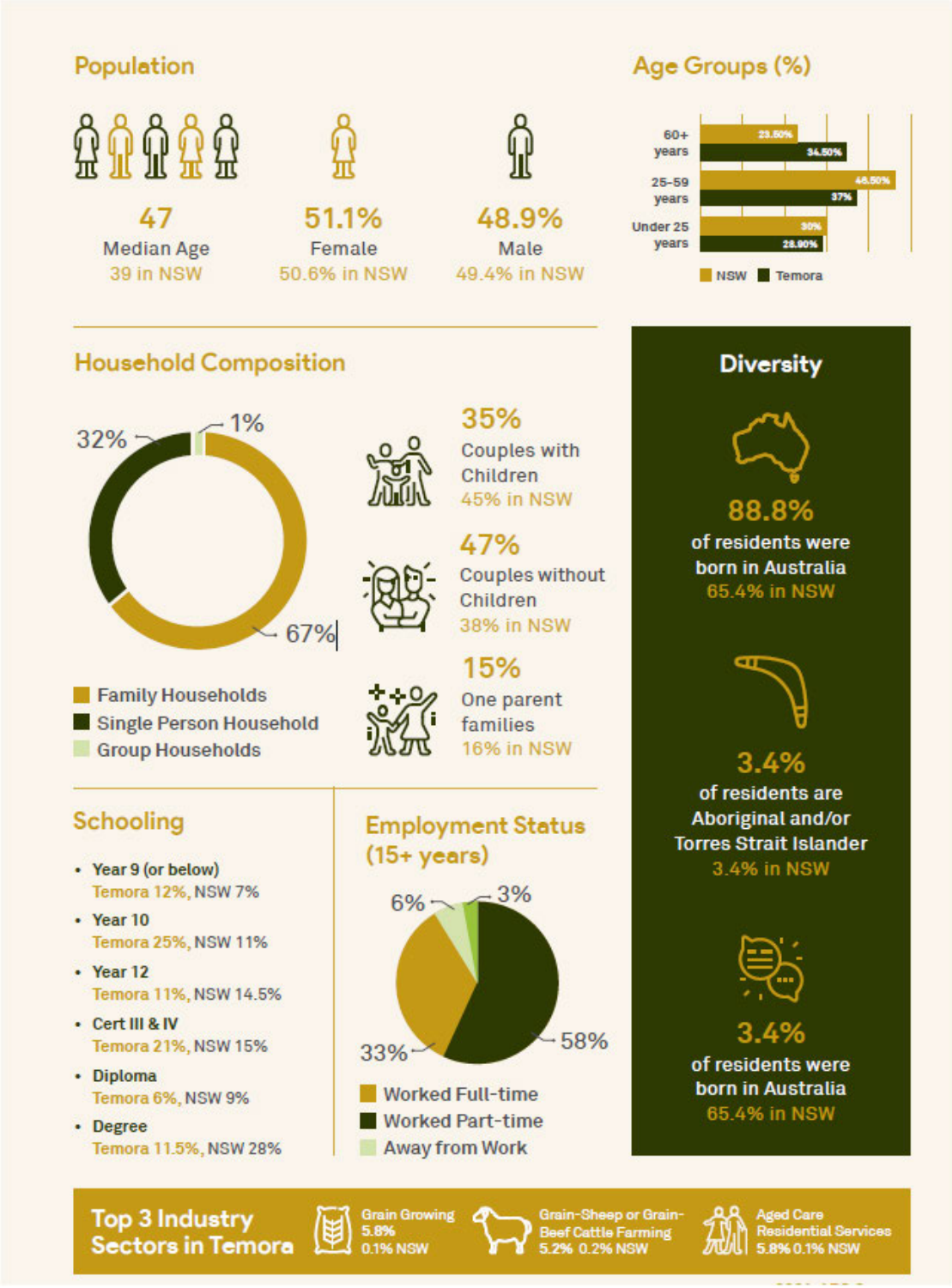
- Engage the community in relation to operational activities.
- Oversee preparation of the CES and IP&R component documents and endorsement by the elected council.
- Ensure that community members are given enough information to participate in the IP&R process in a meaningful way.

Staff
Councils staff are to:

- Work with and support the General Manager in the development of the strategy and plans to engage the community.
- Implement the engagement strategy and provide timely advice to the general manager on community views

5. Who we are

If we are to effectively engage, we need a clear picture of who we are. The following graphic provides a snapshot of our community.



6. Who we engage with

A vital component of the community engagement process includes identifying and understanding key stakeholders who will be impacted by or who have an interest in a decision. Our engagement aims to reach the community to ensure a range of views are heard.

Individual residents and ratepayers, and we will proactively seek opportunities to hear from:

- Children and young people
- Retirees and other people
- First nations people
- People with disability
- People with English as a second language
- People who work.
- Unemployed people
- Parents and carers
- People who live in our towns
- People who live in more rural and remote parts of the Shire
- People of different genders and sexualities
- People who are students
- People who are volunteers
- People who live by themselves
- People who live with their family
- People who live in share-houses and other accommodation arrangements.

People who come to our Shire to work, rest and play.

- Contractors and short-term employees
- Tourists and other visitors to our Shire
- People who come in our Shire to participate in sporting, cultural and other leisure activities.

Representatives of other government organisations

- Neighbouring councils
- Goldenfields Water County Council
- Riverina Joint Organisation
- State Government agencies such as Primary Industries and the Environment, Health, Housing, Education, Regional Development, Family & Community Services, Planning, Heritage, Police, Sport, Local Land Services
- State & Federal members of Parliament.

Representatives of community groups, businesses, and industries

- Farming/Agricultural groups
- Hospitality and retail representatives
- Health and aged care groups
- Temora Business Enterprise Group
- Essential Energy
- Aviation groups
- Schools
- Sports Clubs
- CWA
- Men’s Shed
- Senior Citizens

- Progress Associations
- Church groups
- Village committees
- Service Clubs
- Council advisory groups & community committees.

What we engage on

Project	**Level of Engagement**	**Timeframe**
Integrated Planning & Reporting Documents	Involve	28 days
Council Policies	Consult	28 days or Council resolution
Masterplans to inform future works eg: playgrounds, pedestrian access	Involve	At least 28 days
Council Strategies	Involve	At least 28 days
Reclassification of Land	Consult	28 days
Development Applications	Consult	14 days
Project & Service Delivery	Inform	7 days
Emergency Notification	Inform	As soon as practicable
Road Naming Proposals	Consult	21 days with a further 21 days after Council GNB approval
Donation Requests	Inform	28 days
Australia Day Nominations	Inform	3 months
Leases, Tenders, Expressions of Interest	Inform	14 days
Committee representation	Inform	28 days

7. How we engage

7.1 Engaging in person

Engagement or participation is not only about having your say, but also about listening to others to understand their point of view. In person engagement activities allow an opportunity for discussion.

- Exhibition documentation displayed at Temora Shire Council administration office.
- Community workshops, stakeholder meetings and information sessions enable the community to understand and be understood by others when sharing their views.
- Council deputations allow community members to address Councillors on items for consideration at a public form prior to council meetings.
- Committees provide a meeting forum for community group representatives to raise issues relevant to the Committee's Terms of Reference
    - Environmental Liaison Committee
    - Local Emergency Management
    - Riverina Eastern Regional Organisation of Councils (REROC)
    - Riverina Regional Library Service
    - Bland-Temora Bushfire Zoning Liaison Committee
    - Goldenfields Water County Council
    - Temora Traffic Committee
    - Riverina Regional Weeds Committee
    - Lachlan Regional Transport Committee

- Riverina JO
- Pinnacle Community Services Committee
- Mary Gilmore Cultural Festival Committee
- Imagine Temora
- Lake Centenary Management Committee
- Australia Day
- Ariah Park Advisory Committee
- Bushfire Management Committee
- Bundawarrah Centre Management Committee
- Friends of Temora Shire Cemeteries
- Town Hall Theatre
- Temora Agriculture and Innovation Committee
- Temora Women's Network
- Springdale Community Committee
- Temora Business Enterprise Group (TBEG)
- Temora and District Sports Council
- Heritage Committee
- Film Club
- Ariah Park Pool Committee
- Access & Equity Committee
- Sister City Committee
- Temora Fight the Fruit Fly Committee
- Temora Arts Centre

- Direct contact, either in person or over the phone, with individual community members and groups on specific projects and plans.

7.2 Engaging online

Online communication and engagement are growing and can allow people who may otherwise be excluded from in-person engagement activities to have their say.

- Council's website provides information to the public on all Council projects and services and invites feedback.
- Social media keeps the community up to date on Council news and provides the community access opportunities to learn more and have their say on Council matters.
- Narraburra News provides a monthly update on council news including council meetings.

7.3 Engaging traditionally.

There is still a need and appetite for traditional methods of engagement. Some traditional methods are outlined under engaging in person.

- Print publications distributed to our stakeholder groups include Narraburra News
- Direct mail to residents and groups, including rates notices.
- Onsite or physical displays and signage at events or key locations.

8. Levels of Community Participation

Council's approach to community engagement is built upon a spectrum developed by the International Association for Public Participation (IAP2).

IAP2's Spectrum of Public Participation was designed to assist with the selection of the level of participation that defines the public's role in any public participation process. The Spectrum is used internationally, and it is found in public participation plans around the world.

The IAP2 Public Participation Spectrum identifies that there are different levels of engagement from Informing through to Empowering. No single approach to engagement will serve every project. The spectrum requires that the level of engagement must be determined by considering the issue, problem or opportunity requiring engagement, the objectives to be achieved by engaging and the extent that the community can assist us to make decisions.

Strategy	Application Examples	Goal	Commitment	Method
Inform	• Customer Service Enquiries • Rate Notices • Weekly Radio address • The Temora Independent • Social Media platforms	To provide stakeholders with appropriate information on Council, its decision making, services, events, projects and any associated issues. This is the primary form of community For a number of people, depending on the nature of the issue, this may be the only form of community engagement they want	We will keep you informed	- Media releases - Narraburra News - Online: website, email, social media, forums, e-newsletters - Distribution of inhouse documents and publications - Notification letters - Public consultation - Letter box drops - Internal Communication/ consultation - Official opening/ launch - Displays
Consult	• Development Applications • Council Policies • Planning Proposals	Actively seeks stakeholder's views and input into policy, plans and decisions. Council retains overall decision making responsibility	We will listen to you, consider your ideas and oncerns and keep you informed. Planning decisions should be made in an open and transparent way and the community will be provided with reasons for those decisions, including how community views have been taken into account. Workshops or Committees established to provide input into	- Media releases - Community newsletters - Paid advertising - Online: website, email, social media, forums, e-newsletters - Distribution of inhouse documents and publications - Notification letters - Community meetings - Surveys and questionnaires - Public consultation - Letter box drops - Internal communication/ consultation

			Strategic Documentation, will be compiled into a report that will accompany our Documents while on Public Exhibition	- Official opening/ launch - Pre-application consultation re major Development Applications - Planning Forums - Displays
Involve	• Delivery Program • Operational Plan • Planning Strategies • Major Projects	To work directly with stakeholders to ensure that ideas, concerns and aspirations are understood and considered. Involving a two way exchange of information that encourages discussion and provides an opportunity to influence the outcome. While 'involve' assumes a greater level of participation by stakeholders as they work through issues and alternatives to assist in the decision-making process, Council retains overall decision making responsibility.	We will work with you to ensure that your ideas, concerns and aspirations are considered and provide feedback. Planning decisions should be made in an open and transparent way and the community will be provided with reasons for those decisions, including how community views have been taken into account. Working Groups or Committees established to provide input into Strategic Documentation, will be compiled into a report that will accompany our Documents while on Public Exhibition	- Media releases - Community newsletters - Paid advertising - Online: website, email, social media, forums, e-newsletters - Distribution of inhouse documents and publications - Notification letters - Community meetings - Surveys and questionnaires - Committees - Public consultation - Letter box drops - Internal communication - Official opening/ launch - Displays
Collaborate	• Community Strategic Plan (CSP) • Community Committee • Major Projects	To work in partnership with stakeholders, incorporating their input and advice, jointly formulating solutions and/ or options, and sharing agenda setting and deliberation of issues. Occurs when ownership of an issue is shared between Council and community stakeholders. May be some level of delegated decision	We will work together in seeking the best outcomes for Temora Shire Council Working Groups or Committees established to provide input into Strategic Documentation, will be compiled into a report that will accompany our Documents while on Public Exhibition.	- Surveys and questionnaires - Online: website, email, social media, forums, e-newsletters - Focus groups - Forums and Workshops - Media releases - Committees - Public exhibition - Letter box drops - Internal communication/ consultation - Official opening/ launch - Displays

		making to community stakeholders, but Council retains overall decision making responsibility.		
Empower	Very specific community projects where Council has the ability to delegate decision making authority	To place final decision making in the hands of stakeholders. Empowered communities share responsibility for making decisions and accountability for the outcomes of those decisions. Legislative and policy frameworks may give power to communities to make decisions. The community may have the power to make a limited range of decisions (e.g. on a specified issue or for a limited time) or it may have extensive. decision- making powers.	We will ensure the collective position of the community is an integral part of the decision-making process	By ensuring that the core principles of integrity, inclusion, deliberation and influence are evident in all community engagement.

9. Community Engagement Planning

10. How we respond to feedback

We want to ensure the community feedback is considered when decisions are made.
Once feedback has been considered, Council staff will recommend next steps or outcomes.

As part of the process to close the loop, we will:

- **Summary Reports:** Publish community engagement outcomes on the Council's website, showing how feedback influenced decisions.
- **Community Feedback Forums:** Host forums where decisions influenced by community input are explained.

- **Direct Communication:** Use newsletters, social media, and email notifications to share engagement outcomes.
- **Engagement Registers:** Maintain an accessible engagement register outlining consultation activities and outcomes.
- **Engagement Page:** Update the engagement page outlining engagement outcomes and next steps.
- **Email** those who provided feedback with the outcomes of the consultation and link to the project page. Prior to Council considering the matter, we will email people who have provided feedback (who have not opted out of receiving updates) that a report will be submitted to Council.

When an item is placed on exhibition the resulting report to Council will provide the findings of the community engagement. The Council report will include a high-level summary of engagement and may include:

- Engagement and communication methods used.
- Participation and engagement data
- Information about submissions/feedback received.

The report will summarise the submissions and provide a staff response. Submissions may be provided as an attachment.

Following a Council meeting, those who provided feedback will be emailed Council's resolution, The project page will be updated, and link to Agendas and Minutes will be included in Council's eNews.

11. Evaluation and measurement

To measure and evaluate the effectiveness of our engagement, we assess:

- Measurable participation levels in engagement activities.
- The methods used and if they were appropriate and relevant to the stakeholders.
- If the responses were relevant to the plan or project
- Verbal and written feedback from the community on the effectiveness of the engagement activities used, and adequacy of the material and information to give informative feedback.
- Achievement of the engagement aims in the Community Engagement Strategy
- If we engaged with diverse groups, and what feedback we receive from under-represented groups.

To ensure effective measurement and continual improvement we will:

- Evaluation Framework: Create criteria for evaluating engagement effectiveness, including participation rates, representativeness, and feedback quality.

- Post-Engagement Surveys: Conduct surveys after major engagements to measure community satisfaction with processes.

- Annual Review: Perform an annual CES review, incorporating key performance indicators (KPIs) related to engagement reach and effectiveness.

- Audit and Reporting: Include engagement evaluation findings in the Council's annual report.

These evaluation results will be used to continually improve our engagement methods and inform future engagement strategies. We will conduct an Annual CES performance review with detailed reporting on achieved KPIs and a bi-annual community satisfaction surveys to gauge public awareness of Council's engagement efforts.

This strategy will be reviewed within three months of the local government election, as part of the broader review of the Community Strategic Plan, or as required in the event of legislative changes or requirements.