Community Engagement Policy

As required by section 50A of the Local Government Act

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Contents

1. Purpose 2
2. Scope 2
3. Definitions 2
4. Our Core Values 3
5. Principles 3
6. Public consultation categories 3
7. Charter engagement requirements 4
8. Other decisions, activities and processes 5
9. Consultation Plan 5
10. Delegation 5
11. References 6
12. Records management 6
13. Document review 6
14. Further information 6

Attachment 1 7

1. Purpose

1.1. The purpose of this policy is to ensure Council meets its legislative obligations[1] regarding public consultation and to provide guidance on undertaking engagement activities in a manner that is appropriate, effective and consistent with the requirements of the Act and the Charter.

1.2. Public consultation is a key component of Council's decision-making processes. Council is committed to using engagement methods that are relevant and cost-effective, encouraging participation from the community, key stakeholders and interested parties, and using feedback to inform and enhance its decisions. Where reasonable and appropriate, Council will also provide information on the reasons for its decisions and actions.

2. Scope

2.1. This policy applies to decisions, activities and processes undertaken by Council[2] where public consultation is required to be undertaken in accordance with the Act, the Charter, or this policy.

2.2. The CEO is responsible for the implementation and application of this policy, and where necessary reporting the outcomes of consultations to Council.

2.3. This policy does not apply where Council is exercising powers and functions under any other Act.[3]

3. Definitions

3.1. ***Act*** means the *Local Government Act 1999*;

3.2. ***access*** means the right, opportunity, means of finding, using or retrieving Council information;

3.3. ***CEO*** means Chief Executive Officer of Council;

3.4. ***Charter*** means the Minister for Local Government's Community Engagement Charter published in the South Australian Government Gazette on 11 December 2025.

3.5. ***consultation*** means a process of community engagement where information is provided, and the community is formally invited to comment and make submissions to Council;

3.6. ***community*** encompasses any person who lives, works, pays rates, conducts private or government business, visits, utilises services, facilities and public space within the Council area;

3.7. ***Council*** means Adelaide Plains Council;

3.8. ***Council meeting*** means formal meetings of Council Members held in accordance with the Act (but to avoid doubt does not include information or briefing sessions held under section 90A of the Act);

3.9. ***Council Member*** means a member of Council elected or appointed in accordance with the Act or *Local Government (Elections) Act 1999*;

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[1] Section 50A of the Act.

[2] A reference in this policy to 'Council' includes a reference to a delegate or other person exercising power on the Council's behalf.

[3] Where there are consultation requirements under other legislation, e.g. the Planning, Development and Infrastructure Act 2016, those specific processes take precedence over this policy.

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3.10. ***feedback*** means comments, both positive and negative, about services provided by Council without necessarily requiring a corrective action, change of services or formal review of a decision. Feedback may, however, influence future service reviews and delivery methods;

4. Our Core Values

Our approach to community engagement is underpinned by Council's core values:

Honesty and Integrity	Innovative and Open-minded	Leadership and Diplomacy	Professionalism	Respect	Teamwork
Building trust and loyalty with the community and within Council.	Being proactive in continually improving our services.	By acting strategically and effectively managing our relationships.	Through commitment, quality and timeliness of work delivered.	For others, acting with humility and empathy.	Through unity, cooperation and support.

5. Principles

5.1. The following principles in the Charter have been considered in the preparation of this policy and guide Council's approach to community engagement:

a) community members should have reasonable, timely, meaningful and ongoing opportunities to gain access to information about proposed decisions, activities, processes of councils and to participate in relevant processes;

b) information about issues should be in plain language, readily accessible and in a form that facilitates community participation;

c) participation methods should seek to foster and encourage constructive dialogue, discussion and debate in relation to proposed decisions, activities and processes of councils;

d) participation methods should be appropriate having regard to the significance and likely impact of proposed decisions, activities and processes; and

e) insofar as is reasonable, communities should be provided with information about how community views have been taken into account and reasons for decisions or actions of councils.

6. Public consultation categories

The Charter establishes different categories of consultation for matters, as follows:

6.1. Significant – Annual business plan and rating policy

a) Adopting an Annual Business Plan[4]

b) Changes to basis of rating, declaring differential rates, imposing a separate rate, service rate or service charge, or changing the basis on which land is valued for the purpose of rating[5]

[4] Section 123(3)(b) of the Act.

[5] Section 151(5)(e) of the Act.

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6.2. Significant

a) Representation reviews[6]
b) Development and review of Strategic Management Plans[7]
c) Changes to use of differential rating[8]
d) Revocation of classification of land as community land[9]
e) Community Land Management Plans (adoption)[10]
f) Community Land Management Plans (significant amendments)[11]
g) Alienation of community land by lease or license[12]
h) Passing of by-laws[13]
i) Change of status of Council or change of various names[14]

6.3. Standard

a) Opening hours and place of principal office (substantial changes)[15]
b) Community Engagement Policy[16]
c) Council behavioural support policies[17]
d) Access to meetings and documents[18]
e) Power to make orders[19]

6.4. Local

a) Proposed permit or authorisation for alteration or use of a road for business purposes when there are works and traffic impeded for more than 48 hours (with a detour in place) or where no detour will be available[20]
b) Proposed planting of vegetation on a road (significant impact)[21]
c) Prudential requirements for certain activities[22]

6.5. Inform

a) Opening hours and place of principal office (minor changes)[23]
b) Proposed permit or authorisation for alteration or use of a road for business purposes when there are works and traffic impeded for less than 48 hours and the Council ensures that a detour is in place[24]
c) Election information[25]

7. Charter engagement requirements

7.1. The Charter addresses minimum mandatory community engagement activities for matters where the Act requires public consultation to be undertaken.

7.2. At a minimum, Council will undertake public consultation in accordance with the Act and the Charter (Attachment 1).

[6] Section 12(7) of the Act.
[7] Section 122(6) of the Act.
[8] Section 156(4a)(b) of the Act.
[9] Section 194(2)(b) of the Act.
[10] Section 197 (1) of the Act.
[11] Section 198(3) of the Act.
[12] Section 202(2) of the Act.
[13] Section 249 of the Act.
[14] Section 13 of the Act.
[15] Section 45(3) of the Act.
[16] Section 50A(6)(b) of the Act.
[17] Section 75F(6) of the Act.
[18] Section 92(5) of the Act.
[19] Section259(2)(b) of the Act.
[20] Section 223(1) of the Act.
[21] Section 232(b) of the Act.
[22] Section 48 of the Act.
[23] Section 45(3) of the Act.
[24] Section 223(1) of the Act.
[25] Section 13A (2) of the *Local Government (Elections) Act 1999*

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8. Other decisions, activities and processes

8.1. Council recognises there may be decisions, activities and processes where the Act and Charter are silent in relation to community engagement, but for which community engagement may nevertheless be appropriate.

8.2. Council may, at its absolute discretion, undertake community engagement activities in relation to these matters, or undertake steps in addition to or less than those set out in this policy where public consultation is required. Council is not required to give prior consideration to, or determine whether to undertake, any such steps but will, in making such a determination consider if the matter:

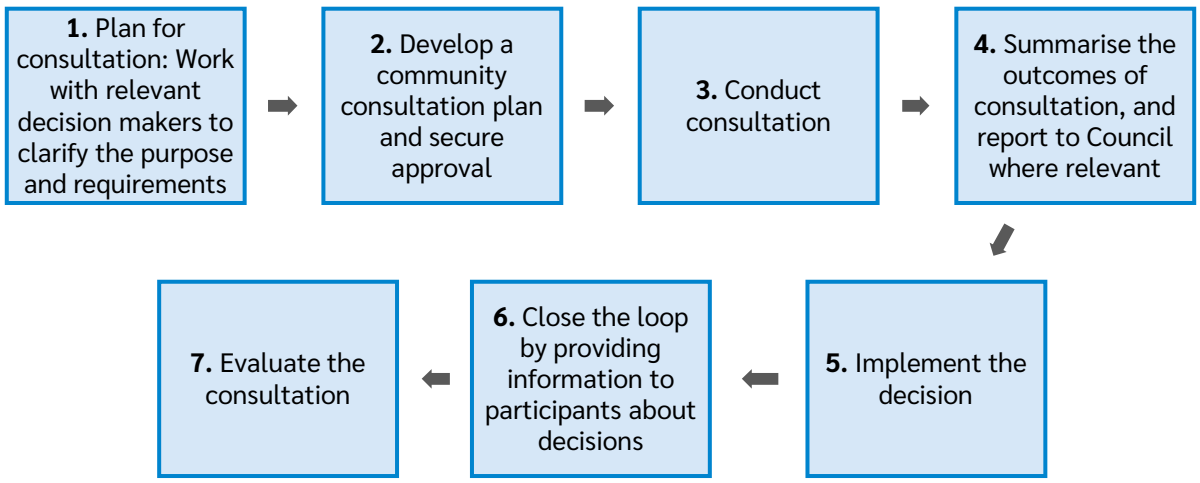
(a) Involves significant expenditure on large scale capital works;
(b) Is of economic, social, environmental or cultural importance;
(c) Is, or is likely to be, of significant community interest; or
(d) Is likely to be enhanced through engagement with the community.

9. Consultation plan

9.1. A consultation plan is required for all matters in which community engagement will be undertaken and will identify, at a minimum:

(a) Purpose and objectives for consultation;
(b) Legislative requirements;
(c) Parameters: what is negotiable and non-negotiable;
(d) Key stakeholders and their level of influence or impact;
(e) Timeframes;
(f) Consultation methods; and
(g) Risk assessment

9.2. The following flowchart outlines the general consultation steps:



10. Delegation

10.1. Specific engagement activities to be undertaken in relation to any particular decision, activity or processes shall be determined on a case by case basis, by:

- Council, by resolution;

- the CEO;
- a delegate with the power to undertake community engagement under the Act, the Charter or this policy; or
- a delegate with power to make a decision or undertake an activity or process that requires community engagement under the Act, the Charter or this policy.

10.2. Council, the CEO or a delegate is not required by this policy to undertake, or to consider or determine whether to undertake, additional engagement activities or engagement methods. Such a decision is at the absolute discretion of the decision maker.

11. References

Local Government Act 1999

12. Records management

All documents relating to this policy will be registered in Council's Record Management System and remain confidential where identified.[26]

13. Document review

This policy will be reviewed in accordance with Council's *Policy Review Schedule* to ensure legislative compliance and its continued relevance to Council's needs, activities and programs.

14. Further information

Public Access:	Members of the community may inspect this policy (and any other related documents) free of charge at: Council's website: **www.apc.sa.gov.au;** or Council's Principal Office: **2a Wasleys Rd, Mallala SA 5502**. *A copy of this policy may be obtained on payment of a fee.*[27]
Queries:	Any queries in relation to this policy must be in writing to info@apc.sa.gov.au, marked: *Attention: Manager Governance*

[26] Refer to Council's ***Information Management Policy***.

[27] As outlined in Council's Fees & Charges Schedule.

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LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 1999

Section 50 Community Engagement Charter

The Community Engagement Charter (the Charter) is established by the Minister for Local Government pursuant to Section 50 of the *Local Government Act 1999* (the Act) for the purposes of this Act.

Principles

This charter has been prepared taking into account the following principles contained in Section 50(2) of the *Local Government Act 1999*—

(a) members of the community should have reasonable, timely, meaningful and ongoing opportunities to gain access to information about proposed decisions, activities and processes of councils and to participate in relevant processes;

(b) information about issues should be in plain language, readily accessible and in a form that facilitates community participation;

(c) participation methods should seek to foster and encourage constructive dialogue, discussion and debate in relation to proposed decisions, activities and processes of councils;

(d) participation methods should be appropriate having regard to the significance and likely impact of proposed decisions, activities and processes;

(e) insofar as is reasonable, communities should be provided with information about how community views have been taken into account and reasons for decisions or actions of councils.

Categories

In recognition of the fact that the matters included for community engagement in this Charter have differing levels of impact on councils' communities, this Charter establishes the following categories of engagement and requirements that are appropriate to each group—

- **Significant—annual business plan and rating policy**: decisions related to a council's adoption of its annual business plan or proposed changes to the basis of its council rates.
- **Significant**: decisions that a council makes that have a significant impact on most or all ratepayers and residents, or the wider community or area.
- **Standard**: decisions that a council makes that benefit from community input across the council area.
- **Local**: decisions that impact an identifiable smaller group of residents/ratepayers or a local area.
- **Inform**: matters where councils provide information to a community impacted by a decision.

Mandatory Requirements Definitions

Where the Charter includes a mandatory requirement, the following table provides more information about actions that must be taken at a minimum to meet that requirement for community engagement.

While these actions are mandatory, councils should actively consider all activities that should be undertaken for each matter that it is consulting on to give community members the best chance to make their views known. In particular, councils should undertake additional engagement for matters that have greater significance, greater community interest or a greater impact on communities.

In this Charter 'community' means individuals, groups or stakeholders that are impacted by or interested in a particular council decision or action. Councils should seek broad, diverse and representative views across its community.

Whenever a council is preparing information to support engagement, it should be in plain language, readily accessible and in a form that facilitates community participation.

Categories

Mandatory Requirement	**Mandatory Minimum Actions to Achieve the Mandatory Requirements**	**Mandatory Requirement that Applies to Matters Categorised as: (X indicates that the mandatory requirement applies)**				
		Significant—Annual Business Plan and Rating Policy	**Significant**	**Standard**	**Local**	**Inform**
Website	Publish information about the matter that can be easily found on a council website.	X	X	X	X	X
News publication	Publish information about the matter in a local news publication (print where available, but otherwise digital) that circulates in the council area and is not produced by the council.	X	X			
Consult with the whole council area	Consider appropriate forms of notifications to the council area. Consider whether additional information or notification should be made available to the community to bring their attention to the matter and to support participation.	X	X	X		

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Mandatory Requirement	Mandatory Minimum Actions to Achieve the Mandatory Requirements	Mandatory Requirement that Applies to Matters Categorised as: (X indicates that the mandatory requirement applies)				
		Significant—Annual Business Plan and Rating Policy	Significant	Standard	Local	Inform
Invite submissions	Provide information about how the community can make a submission, including timeframe.	X	X			
Explain decision-making process	In material prepared explain what the council proposes to do, why it proposes to do it, and what it seeks to achieve. Explain how community feedback will inform the council's decision.	X	X			
Seek and consider feedback from the community—significant matters	Consider how best to invite feedback from the community. Provide a minimum community engagement period of 21 days to enable the community to provide feedback. Include a summary of community engagement feedback to the council ahead of the decision.	X	X			
Public meeting	Hold a public meeting where the community is invited to provide submissions (written or verbal) on the matter. The public meeting may be part of a council meeting or a separate event.	X				
Council meeting invitation	Invite people who have made a written submission to attend a council meeting to speak to their submission before the decision is made.		X			
Seek and consider feedback from the community	Consider how best to invite feedback from the community Provide information about how community feedback will inform the council's decision. Ensure an appropriate period of time is provided to enable communities to provide feedback.			X	X	
Consult with local community	Consider appropriate forms of notifications to the area within the council affected by the council decision or action. Consider whether additional information or notification should be made available to the local community to bring their attention to the matter and to support participation.				X	
Information to the whole council area	Provide information to the whole of the council's community if it may be directly affected by the council decision or action.					X

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Mandatory Requirement	Mandatory Minimum Actions to Achieve the Mandatory Requirements	Mandatory Requirement that Applies to Matters Categorised as: (X indicates that the mandatory requirement applies)				
		Significant—Annual Business Plan and Rating Policy	Significant	Standard	Local	Inform
Information to local community	Provide information to the local community that may be directly affected by the council decision or action.					X

Matters (in Legislative Order)

Category	Matter	Act Reference	Description
Significant	Representation reviews	Section 12(7) of the *Local Government Act 1999*	Consultation that a council undertakes when it is doing a review of its internal representation (including possible changes to its ward structure, number of council members, change of council or ward names).
Inform	Minor changes to opening hours and place of council offices	Section 45(3) of the *Local Government Act 1999*	A council's decision about the manner, places and times at which its offices will be open to the public, where the impact of the decision would be minor.
Standard	Substantial changes to the opening hours and place of council offices	Section 45(3) of the *Local Government Act 1999*	A council's decision about the manner, places and times at which its offices will be open to the public, where the impact of the decision would be substantial.
Standard	Community engagement policy	Section 50A(6)(b) of the *Local Government Act 1999*	Councils must consult before adopting its community engagement policy, which is the document that demonstrated how the council will consult in accordance with this charter and on other matters.
Standard	Council behavioural support policies	Section 75(F)(6) of the *Local Government Act 1999*	Consultation that a council undertakes when it is proposing to adopt behavioural support policies.
Standard	Access to meetings and documents	Section 92(5) of the *Local Government Act 1999*	How councils ensure that council documents are made available and accessible to community members.
Significant	Strategic Management Plans	Section 122(6) of the *Local Government Act 1999*	The development and review of a council's strategic management plan. Strategic management plans lay out the council's strategic directions for a future ten-year period, including council's long-term financial plan and infrastructure and asset management plan.
Significant—annual business plan and rating policy	Annual Business Plan	Section 123(3)(b) of the *Local Government Act 1999*	Adopting an annual business plan. Annual business plans set out the decisions a council makes each year on the rates and income they will receive and how they will spend these funds.
Significant—annual business plan and rating policy	Basis of rating	Section 151(5)(e) of the *Local Government Act 1999*	Consultation that a council takes when it is proposing changes to the basis of its council rates, including declaring differential rates; imposing a separate rate, service rate or service charge; changing the basis on which land is valued for the purposes of rating.
Significant	Differential rating and special adjustments	Section 156 (14a)(b) of the *Local Government Act 1999*	Consultation that a council takes when it is proposing changes to its use of differential rating.
Significant	Revocation of classification of land as community land—in all other cases	Section 194(2)(b) of the *Local Government Act 1999*	Consultation that councils must undertake before revoking the community land status of any land that is community land.

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Category	Matter	Act Reference	Description
Significant	Community Land Management Plans—adoption	Section 197(1) of the *Local Government Act 1999*	Before a council adopts a community land management plan, it must undertake consultation.
Significant	Community Land Management Plans—significant amendments	Section 198(3) of the *Local Government Act 1999*	If a council amends a community land management plan, and the amendment has a significant impact on the community, it must undertake consultation.
Significant	Alienation of community land by lease or licence	Section 202(2) of the *Local Government Act 1999*	Consultation that a council undertakes when it is proposing to lease or licence community land.
Inform	Council is proposing a permit or authorisation for alternation of a road or use of roads for business purposes	Section 223(1) of the *Local Government Act 1999*	Consultation that a council takes when there are works on a road that require the council's permit and authorisation, and where traffic will be impeded for less than 48 hours and the council ensures that a detour is in place.
Local	Council is proposing a permit or authorisation for alternation of a road or use of roads for business purposes	Section 223(1) of the *Local Government Act 1999*	Consultation that a council takes when there are works on a road that require the council's permit and authorisation, and where traffic will be impeded for more than 48 hours (with a detour in place) or where no detour will be available.
Local	Consultation on proposed planting of vegetation on a road	Section 232(b) of the *Local Government Act 1999*	Consultation that a council takes when it proposes or authorises or permits for planting street trees or other vegetation on council roads, if the planting may have a significant impact on residents, nearby business or advertisers in the area.
Standard	Power to make orders	Section 259(2)(b) of the *Local Government Act 1999*	Councils must have policies in place on how they make orders relating to hazards on land adjoining a public place and the inappropriate use of a caravan or vehicle as a place of habitation and must consult before they adopt these policies.
Inform	Election information	Section 13A(2) of the *Local Government (Elections) Act 1999*	Councils must provide information, education and publicity for local government elections.

Commencement

The Community Engagement Charter comes into operation on the day on which it is published in the Gazette.

Dated: 2 December 2025

HON JOE SZAKACS MP
Minister for Local Government

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