

 <b>Adelaide Plains Council</b>	<b>Community Engagement Policy – Public Forums</b>
	<b>Version Adoption by Council:</b> 27 February 2023 <b>Resolution Number:</b> 2023/049 <b>Current Version:</b> V3
	<b>Administered by:</b> Chief Executive Officer
<b>Document No:</b> D23/3378	<b>Strategic Outcome</b> <i>4.4.2 Actively engage with and inform our communities</i>

## 1. Objective

To provide a clear process for the successful facilitation of public community forums to be held across the Adelaide Plains Council (Council) region.

Council commits to facilitating community engagement to:-

- 1.1 Involve its community in Council decision-making.
- 1.2 Strengthen the relationships between Council and its stakeholders.
- 1.3 Help encourage ownership within the community over strategies, projects and decisions that affect them. This community ownership can support long-term sustainability of projects and initiatives.
- 1.4 Help Council to develop an understanding of the make-up, characteristics, needs and priorities of the community.
- 1.5 Maximise the knowledge and experience upon which decisions are based.
- 1.6 Work in partnership with the community to co-create a region that is an attractive and rewarding place to live, work, and visit.

It is important that the community understands that there are many factors that impact on a Council decision being made. Factors such as financial and resource considerations, political directives and environmental and social concerns all play important roles in the decision-making process.

## 2. Scope

This Policy applies to all Members of Council, Council staff and to all members of the public who wish to engage with Council in accordance with this Policy.

### **3. Public Community Forums – Protocols and Procedures**

#### **3.1 Method of Engagement**

The primary method of Council's community engagement will be by holding forums across the Council region. Council will hold regular forums across the Council area in order to consult with its community and to demonstrate Council's commitment to openness and transparency.

#### **3.2 Frequency and Timing of Forums**

Forums will be scheduled by the Council's Chief Executive Officer (CEO) at a date, time and location to be determined by the CEO. There will be a total of three (3) forums each year.

#### **3.3 Public Notice of Forums**

Council's CEO will give notice to the public of the times, places and duration of the forums at least two (2) weeks prior to the forum in the following manner:-

- On Council's website;
- One (1) advertisement in local newspapers;
- On public Council notice boards around the region;
- By written invitation to any other specific relevant stakeholders within the Council region (for example community groups).

#### **3.4 Forum Facilitator**

Forums will be facilitated by the Council's Mayor (and in the Mayor's absence, the Deputy Mayor) and will be held in accordance with this Policy and having regard for the provisions of the *Local Government Act 1999* (the Act).

The Mayor will have complete discretion over the forum protocols and procedures outlined within this Policy.

#### **3.5 Public Access and Conduct**

Subject to adherence to this Policy, forums will be open to the public. Members of the public must, at all times, be respectful and behave in an orderly manner.

Council is committed to creating a strong, positive and safe environment for everyone to share their views in a respectful manner.

If the Mayor considers that a person is behaving in a disorderly or improper manner (including causing interruption to the person speaking at the forum), the Mayor may ask the person to leave the forum.

### **3.6 Structure and Procedure**

The CEO will provide an opening address at each forum for the purpose of providing an update to the community on Council's projects and activities. This may form a focus topic for the forum which will be communicated in the public notice.

Members of the public will have an opportunity to ask questions, or present any matters for Council's consideration. The process for community members to present to Council will be as follows:-

3.6.1 Depending on public requests/interest, the Mayor will determine an appropriate period for persons wishing to address Council (with a maximum of five (5) minutes per person).

3.6.2 Individuals may use this opportunity to ask questions about Council related topics, or present any matters for Council's consideration, subject to adherence with the following guidelines:-

- The community member must provide their full name, town/location and topic details at the beginning of their address.
- All questions need to be addressed to the Mayor and no discussion and/or debate will occur between the community member and individual Council Members.
- The address must maintain focus on the question/matter of concern and must not be about individual Council Members or staff.
- Council Members and Staff are able to ask questions of the public through the Mayor; and
- The Mayor has complete discretion over the process and may refuse to allow discussions to continue if the Mayor considers that the process is not being adhered to.

3.6.3 The Mayor may seek a response or update on an issue from the CEO or delegate.

Forums will remain open for the full duration specified in the notice provided under clause 3.3

## **4. Use of Information and Data**

There are many factors that impact on a Council decision being made. Factors such as financial and resource considerations, political directives and environmental and social concerns all play important roles in the decision-making process.

The CEO will be responsible for recording issues raised/information provided at the community engagement forums.

The CEO will use information and data obtained from the forums, within the organisation where appropriate. For example, an operational matter (such as a request

to fill a pot hole), will be dealt with as a customer request via Council's administration. Non-operational matters (strategic or policy) may, depending on the nature and at the CEO's discretion, be presented to Council at a formal meeting by way of an information report.

Council takes an 'action-orientated' approach and will attempt to resolve any issues presented as expeditiously as possible.

Members of the public are strongly encouraged to provide Council with their contact details if they wish to be contacted regarding a matter raised or would like to receive a summary of the forum. Alternatively, individuals may, and are encouraged to, submit requests for service to Council in accordance with Council's *Requests for Services Policy*.

## **5. References and Related Documents**

*Local Government Act 1999 (SA)*

*2021-2024 Strategic Plan:*

*4.4.2 Actively engage with and inform our communities.*

*Code of Practice – Meeting Procedures*

*Customer Service Charter*

*Public Consultation Policy*

*Requests for Services Policy*