



## **Draft Shire of Corrigin Community Engagement Plan**

### **Policy scope:**

This policy outlines the purpose, principles and approach to community engagement to be taken by the Shire of Corrigin when engaging communities and stakeholders.

The policy will be applied by all employees and consultants appointed by the Shire when engaging those affected by and interested in decisions to be made by Council.

### **Policy statement**

#### **1. Purpose**

The Shire of Corrigin is committed to providing opportunities for all members of the community to participate in civic decision-making processes.

The Shire recognises that the community is a source of knowledge and expertise, and this can be harnessed to help find solutions to local issues as well as complex Shire challenges.

Community engagement is a key part of our commitment to be a transparent and responsive organisation. Our objective is to make better decisions by giving a voice to communities and stakeholders on matters and topics that are of interest and important to them and to develop and encourage a culture which respects and welcomes community input.

#### **2. Principles**

The Shire of Corrigin's approach to community engagement is guided by the following principles:

- 2.1** We clearly communicate why we are engaging and the community's role in the engagement. From the outset, we articulate the purpose of our engagement and what will happen as a result of any information gathered. We explain what level of influence the community, stakeholders and Council have on the decision to be made, and any associated limitations or constraints. We consider the requirements for each project and its level of potential impact on the community to determine the required level and timing of engagement. We provide all information necessary so participants can make informed choices.
- 2.2** We carefully consider who to engage. Before we begin engaging, we identify communities and stakeholders who are directly involved, or likely to be affected by the project. On major projects that set a direction or define a position for the Shire, we encourage broad community participation to ensure that a diverse range of views and ideas are expressed and considered. We also consider barriers that prevent or deter people from participating in engagement activities and consider ways to minimise them.
- 2.3** We explain the process. We aim to be transparent, and make our decision-making process clear. We do this by explaining upfront the process to be undertaken, identifying where there is opportunity for the community and stakeholders to have input, and where the decision-points are. Where possible, we build on the outcomes of previous engagement. If the engagement crosses over with a previous engagement process, we explain the outcomes, identify how they relate to the current process and why a new process is required.
- 2.4** We carefully consider how to engage and ensure our processes, venues and information are accessible. We recognise people engage with civic life in different ways depending on a number of factors, such as age, background and ability. We aim to be responsive to this broad spectrum of needs, and ensure there are multiple engagement methods in various settings, to achieve appropriate community participation. We ensure our engagement is accessible by providing information in clear and easy to understand formats, or is available in alternative formats on request. Our engagement events and venues are designed to be accessible whenever practical and achievable.
- 2.5** We design our engagement to be engaging. The Shire of Corrigin is working to continuously improve how we engage, and design approaches that are creative, relevant and engaging. We are open to new and innovative engagement methodologies, and we are working on ways to tailor our approach to draw people into the process and maximise the reach and impact of our engagement.
- 2.6** We complement our engagement with high quality communication. We provide clear, comprehensive and accessible information, written in plain English, to stakeholders throughout the engagement process. Information about our engagement is on our website and through the Shire's usual communication channels.
- 2.7** We acknowledge contributions made during the engagement process and let participants know how their feedback was used in our decision-making. We are transparent with the community about how their participation was considered, by reporting back what we heard from contributors and how their input has been incorporated in decision making. We also share the results of engagement through our website and other mechanisms as appropriate. We also advise contributors when the matter is to be considered by Council so they may attend Ordinary Council Meetings if they wish.

### **3. Approach**

#### **3.1 When we Consult our Community**

The Shire will engage with the community when:

- Council resolves formally to engage.
- A decision or plan will substantially impact the community and there is some part of the decision or plan that is negotiable.
- Stakeholders or the community have expressed an interest, or could be interested in a decision or plan where there is a range of potential outcomes.
- Community input can enhance decision-making, project outcomes or future opportunities.
- There is legislation, policy or an agreement requiring community engagement or consultation.

#### **3.2 How We Engage**

The level of engagement will vary depending on the nature and complexity of the project or decision and will be guided by the Shire of Corrigin community engagement principles as set out above in Section 2 of this Policy.

Consideration is given to matters like community and stakeholder interest, political sensitivity, opportunities for partnerships, the level of impact, legislative requirements, time and resource and budget constraints. These considerations will guide how and when in the life of a project or decision community engagement may offer the greatest benefit.

Quality community engagement is well planned and executed, inclusive and accessible to all members of the community.

At times Council will engage the community on issues that are of importance or interest to a specific part of the community. In this instance, engagement will be targeted towards this group.

The Shire's engagement approach has four stages to ensure we deliver a consistent approach to engagement activities. This includes: a process of planning (developing an engagement plan); doing (preparing and engaging); reporting (analysing information and providing updates on the engagement) and evaluating (both the process and outcomes).

The purpose of the engagement and the type of input that will assist with the decision to be made, is reflected in the way community engagement is planned and reported. We carefully consider aspects of both qualitative input (such as trends and thoughts) and quantitative input (such as number of participants) when designing engagement methods and reporting back what we heard.

The following matrix is used to assist in determining the most suitable approach, relative to the likely 'level of impact' of a project, plan, service or action. As highlighted by this matrix, there are four levels of engagement: Inform, Consult, Involve, and Collaborate. More than one level of engagement is generally required, as there is likely to be movement back and forth through the different levels as the engagement is implemented, except in the case of projects or issues with only a low level of impact of a localised nature or if there is a statutory requirement to consult.

Expected level of impact	Criteria (one or more of the following)	Engagement approach generally taken	Level of engagement generally required	Examples of engagement methods the Shire may use
High – Shire Wide	<p>High Level of impact on all or a large part of the Shire of Corrigin.</p> <p>Any significant impact on attributes that are considered to be of high value to the Shire, such as the natural environment or heritage.</p> <p>Likely high level of interest across the Shire.</p> <p>Potential high impact on state or regional strategies or directions.</p>	<p>Early engagement with community and stakeholders.</p> <p>Involves a broad range of stakeholders and community members.</p> <p>Utilises a variety of engagement methods to give people who want to contribute, the opportunity to do so.</p> <p>Updates are provided to interested stakeholders and local community.</p> <p>Engagement plan developed in collaboration with the relevant departments and approved by the Chief Executive Officer. Budget allocated to deliver community engagement.</p> <p>Process is evaluated to assess the quality and overall effectiveness of the engagement and assist the Shire's commitment to continually our engagement practice.</p>	<p>Inform</p> <p>Consult</p> <p>Involve</p> <p>Collaborate</p>	<p>Mail drop</p> <p>Media Releases</p> <p>Narrogin Observer</p> <p>Website</p> <p>Email</p> <p>Social Media</p> <p>Focus groups</p> <p>Workshops</p> <p>Working group</p> <p>Surveys</p> <p>Online tools on Have Your Say</p> <p>Face to Face at engagement events</p> <p>Pop ups at community events and spaces</p> <p>Feedback and submission forms</p>

Expected level of impact	Criteria (one or more of the following)	Engagement approach generally taken	Level of engagement generally required	Examples of engagement methods the Shire may use
High – Local	<p>High level of impact on a local area, small community or user group(s) of a specific facility or service.</p> <p>Significant change to any facility or service to the local community.</p> <p>Potential for a high degree of community interest at the local level.</p>	<p>May range from seeking comment on a proposal to involving the community and stakeholders in discussion on proposed options.</p> <p>Comprehensive information is made available to the community to enable informed input.</p> <p>Uses a combination of face to face and online engagement methods to encourage broad participation at different levels.</p> <p>Feedback is collated and made available to all stakeholders.</p> <p>Updates are provided to interested stakeholders and local community.</p>	<p>Inform</p> <p>Consult</p> <p>Involve</p>	<p>Mail drop</p> <p>Media Releases</p> <p>Narrogin Observer</p> <p>Surveys</p> <p>Online tools on Have Your Say</p> <p>Face to Face at engagement events</p> <p>Pop ups at community events and spaces</p> <p>Feedback and submissions forms.</p>

Expected level of impact	Criteria (one or more of the following)	Engagement approach generally taken	Level of engagement generally required	Examples of engagement methods the Shire may use
Low – Shire wide	<p>Lower levels of impact across the Shire.</p> <p>Level of interest among various communities or stakeholder groups.</p> <p>Potential for some, although not significant, impact on state or regional strategies or directions.</p>	<p>Approach may range from seeking comment on a proposal involving the community and stakeholders in discussion and debate on proposed options.</p> <p>Ensures informed input through making comprehensive information available to the community.</p> <p>Uses a combination of face to face and online engagement methods to encourage broad participation at different levels.</p> <p>Feedback is collated and made available to all stakeholders.</p> <p>Updates are provided to interested stakeholders and local community.</p>	<p>Inform</p> <p>Consult</p> <p>Involve</p>	<p>Mail drop</p> <p>Media Releases</p> <p>Narrogin Observer</p> <p>Website</p> <p>Email</p> <p>Social Media</p> <p>Surveys</p> <p>Online tools on Have your Say</p> <p>Face to Face at engagement events</p> <p>Pop ups at community events and spaces</p> <p>Feedback and submission forms</p>

### **3.3 When it is Not Effective or Appropriate to Engage**

It is neither effective nor appropriate for the Shire to engage when:

- A final decision has already been made by council or another agency.
- Council cannot influence a decision by another agency or party.
- The decision to be made concerns a minor operational matter with minimal impact on the community or stakeholders.
- Implementing a project or decision that has already been subject to engagement.
- There is insufficient time due to legislative or legal constraints, or urgent safety issues to be addressed.

In these events, the Shire will inform stakeholders why the decision has been made.

### **3.4 Statutory Engagement**

In some instances, the Shire of Corrigin is legally required to consult with the community. In these cases, the Shire will treat the prescribed level of community engagement as the minimum standard.

The most common instance of this is in relation to development applications and other planning proposals. For planning proposals, the Shire relies on its policies, adopted under the Planning and Development Act 2005, for guidance in regard to consultation and this will continue to be the basis on which the Shire engages with the community on planning matters.

Delivery of community engagement beyond legally required levels will depend on the decision to be made (or project or service to be delivered), the community's interest to participate, the need for Council to understand the community's view, and the opportunity for the community to influence the decision.

### **3.5 Holiday Periods**

The Shire will not commence an engagement process between the last Council meeting of the calendar year and the first Council meeting of the new-year, unless there is a legal requirement, Council direction or other unavoidable necessity to do so.

An additional 14 days will be added to any engagement period that falls between 15 December and 15 January and seven days before and seven days after Easter Sunday.

#### **4. Definitions and Abbreviations**

**Engagement** – The practice of actively bringing community voices into decisions that affect or interest them, using a range of methods.

**Consultation** – Seeking and receiving feedback or opinion, usually on a proposed plan or decision, e.g. seeking comment on a draft policy or concept.

**Community** – A general term for individuals and groups of people not part of an organised structure or group. They may be a community based on geography, or interest, or both, e.g. residents of Highbury, young people interested in skateboarding. The community is not restricted to ratepayers or residents of the Shire of Narrogin.

**Stakeholders** – People who are organised under the banner of a defined group or organisation, often providing representation to a broader group, e.g. Narrogin Chamber of Commerce, a local school or sporting group.

**Engagement tools/methods** – The things we use to activate community input, e.g. an invite for public comment, a workshop, an online survey, a community meeting.

**Level of engagement** – Refers to any one of five levels of engagement (inform, consult, involve, collaborate, empower) defined by the International Association of Public Participation (IAP2) Public Participation Spectrum to describe the community's role in any engagement programme. A complete description of the IAP2 Public Participation Spectrum can be found online at [www.iap2.org](http://www.iap2.org).