

# Policy



## STRATEGIC

# COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

## Head of Power

*Local Government Act 2009.* The Local Government Act 2009 includes as one of its core principles, “democratic representation, social inclusion and meaningful community engagement”.

### Key Supporting Council Document

Lockyer Valley Regional Council Corporate Plan (2022-2027) Lockyer Leadership and Council “Actively engage with the community to inform council decision making processes and communicate on decisions made.”

## Definitions

Council	Lockyer Valley Regional Council (Council).
Community engagement	Any process where Council involves the community in problem solving or decision making and uses community input and consideration in making a decision. Community engagement involves consideration of stakeholder sentiment and preferences and is primarily focused on the level of influence stakeholders may have towards a Council decision.
Community engagement spectrum	Community engagement also refers to deliberate processes of providing meaningful information to any parts of the community likely to be affected by a Council decision or activity, especially those the impact is likely to be a substantial disruption. A range of activities extending from informing the community of change; providing the community opportunity to comment on a range of alternatives; through to empowering the community to make a final decision. Increasing participation by the community in decision making increases the expectation by the community that their input will be used to influence the decision.
Communities of interest	Individuals, groups of individuals, organisations political entities and other stakeholders that have an interest in the outcome of a decision. This can include residents; ratepayers; businesses; interest groups; and may include other levels of government. These

stakeholders may have a diversity of interests and can be impacted by a decision in different ways.

**Stakeholder sentiment** Refers to how an individual or group of stakeholders may think and feel about various options available in the decision-making process. The sentiment can be assessed through formal interviews, surveys, consultations and previous interactions and public comments.

## Policy Objective

To broadly define Council's approach to the engagement of the community and has application across the full range of policy, planning, programs and services delivered by Lockyer Valley Regional Council.

## Policy Scope

Provides a set of guidelines that must be followed when conducting community engagement activities, to align with Council's required standards and the expectations of the community.

## Policy Statement

Lockyer Valley Regional Council views community engagement as a fundamental aspect of Council's role and is an essential element in the planning and delivery of community-focused services and operations and the decisions behind those services and operations.

Council believes community engagement is essential for building strong communities, delivering good governance, demonstrating due regard for those affected by Council decisions and activities, and embedding community recovery and community resilience. Strengthening the community-Council relationship is the responsibility of all Council staff and elected members.

Council is committed to ensuring that community engagement strategies and processes are of a high quality and are implemented in consideration of recognised good practice. Council will ensure that a range of appropriate community engagement methods are offered that are appropriate and responsive to the needs of the diverse communities that constitute the Lockyer Valley Regional Council area.

Community engagement does not replace, but rather informs the decision-making functions of Council.

When engaging the community, Council will:

- Operate with integrity ensuring that where community consultation is sought, the community's responses will genuinely influence Council's decision-making process;
- Apply the most appropriate scope of engagement objectives and techniques of the Public Participation Spectrum developed by the International Association of Public Participation (IAP2);
- Use an appropriate level of engagement;
- Adopt methods that encourage and enable maximum community participation; and
- Be transparent with the community about how their feedback will and has influenced Council's decisions.

Community engagement activities undertaken by Lockyer Valley Regional Council will follow these guiding principles from International Association for Public Participation (IAP2):

- Integrity – when there is openness and honesty about the scope and purpose of engagement.
- Inclusion – when there is an opportunity for a diverse range of values and perspectives to be freely and fairly expressed and heard.
- Deliberation – when there is sufficient and credible information for dialogue, choice and decisions, and when there is space to weigh options, develop common understanding and to appreciate respective roles and responsibilities.
- Influence – when people have input in designing how they participate, when policies and services reflect their involvement and when their impact is apparent.

As a minimum, community engagement activities undertaken by Council will comply with the Local Government Act 2009 and, where applicable, the Sustainable Planning Act 2009 and other relevant local government legislation.

## Human Rights Commitment

Council is committed to respecting, protecting and promoting human rights. Council has an obligation under the *Human Rights Act 2019* to give proper consideration to human rights when making a decision, and to act and make decisions in a way that is compatible with human rights. To the extent that an act or decision under this policy may engage human rights, Council will have regard to the *Human Rights Act 2019* in undertaking the act or making the decision.

## Related Documents

Human Rights Act 2019

Local Government Act 2009 (Section 90D)

Local Government Regulations 2012

Sustainable Planning Act 2009

International Association of Public Participation Matrix