

Policy P103 Stakeholder Engagement

Responsible Business Unit/s	Customer, Communications and Engagement
Responsible Officer	Manager Customer, Communications and Engagement
Affected Business Unit/s	All City business units involved in stakeholder engagement

Policy Objectives

The objectives of this policy are:

- To ensure that, where appropriate, the City of South Perth community and relevant stakeholders have an opportunity to participate and contribute in a meaningful way to decisions made by the City that affect their lives
- To outline the City's commitment and approach to stakeholder engagement, to contribute to good governance, strong leadership and better decision making
- To provide direction and guidance for the practice of stakeholder engagement at the City of South Perth
- To support Elected Members in their decision making by providing informed feedback from stakeholders.

Definitions

Stakeholder engagement

A planned and purposeful process that encompasses a variety of techniques and methods. It is an approach that provides opportunities for stakeholders to be involved in and contribute to decisions that affect their lives.

Note: The terms, 'community engagement' and 'public participation' are widely used across the industry, and may be used interchangeably with 'stakeholder engagement'.

Stakeholders and community

Stakeholders are those affected by or with a specific interest in a decision, project or issue. Stakeholders may be (but are not limited to) individuals, groups, organisations, agencies, businesses, reference and advisory groups, and/or the community. Stakeholders can be internal (i.e. within the organisation) or external (i.e. outside the organisation).

The community can include individuals or groups who live, work, play, study, visit, invest in, or pass through the City of South Perth. They may be ratepayers, residents, business owners, workers, tourists, visitors, or community groups.

These terms are often used interchangeably and are both widely used in the field of stakeholder engagement. Although separate definitions are offered, in practice, the distinction between the two terms is not always clear. Therefore, the terms may be used together, separately or interchangeably.

Policy Scope

This policy applies to all Elected Members, City of South Perth employees and consultants involved in stakeholder engagement activities for the City.

The scope of this policy is guided by Section 1.3 (2) of the *Local Government Act 1995*, which states that the Act is intended to result in:

- Better decision making by local governments
- Greater community participation in the decisions and affairs of local governments
- Greater accountability of local governments to their communities
- More efficient and effective local government.

The policy is also drawn from the City of South Perth's Strategic Community Plan 2021-2031 and internationally accepted core values for engagement, developed by the International Association for Public Participation (IAP2).

In decision making areas related to town planning (including strategic and statutory planning), the City has adopted a specific policy to determine how stakeholder engagement will be undertaken. P301 Advertising of Planning Proposals is drawn from and aligned to the City's stakeholder engagement policy. However, it goes into further detail of the specific statutory and legislative requirements.

Policy Statement

The City of South Perth recognises that involving stakeholders appropriately in projects and processes, and embracing a culture and practice of engagement, leads to more sustainable and informed decision making. Stakeholder Engagement is the responsibility of the entire organisation, including Elected Members, employees and consultants.

Stakeholder Engagement does not take the responsibility for final decision making from the Elected Members. Instead, it supports the decision making process by enabling Elected Members (and employees) to be confident that stakeholder views have been ascertained, understood and considered, along with technical advice and requirements, research, constraints and any other policy or legislative considerations.

The City's Stakeholder Engagement Guide has been developed to guide and support the culture and practice of stakeholder engagement, to enable an approach that is consistent, effective and robust. The Guide includes a toolkit and resources for use by City staff and consultants, along with a training program for staff.

Stakeholder Engagement is also supported at the City by a dedicated Stakeholder Engagement team established to build capacity in the organisation, and provide support, advice and assistance for engagement processes and projects.

Engaging over school holidays and/or Christmas

When stakeholder engagement takes place during school holidays or over the Christmas period (mid-December to mid-January), it will be extended by a minimum of an additional 14 days to provide further time to engage. This requirement does not apply to all statutory advertising and engagement.

Stakeholder engagement principles

The following principles are the foundation of the City's approach to and practice of stakeholder engagement.

1. We are committed to embedding a culture of engagement at the City of South Perth

We will champion engagement at the City. We are committed to integrating engagement into the organisation's processes and practices by providing the necessary resources and support to staff.

2. We know why we are engaging

We are clear about the purpose of the engagement and ensure that this is reflected in the processes we plan and engagement we undertake.

3. We know who to engage

We identify the right stakeholders and use a range of techniques to ensure our approach is inclusive and appropriate.

4. We understand the background and context

We take the time to understand the history, issues or concerns which may affect the project and engagement, and explore the context in order to clearly define the negotiables and non-negotiables.

5. We are committed to genuine engagement

We engage when there is an opportunity for stakeholders to have meaningful input into the decision to be made. We undertake authentic, appropriate engagement and provide stakeholder feedback to the decision makers. We learn from past practice and experience.

6. We are innovative, responsive and professional

We are dedicated to providing high quality engagement and are innovative and flexible in our approach. We work to build relationships and are responsive to the needs of internal and external stakeholders.


Stakeholder engagement at the City is also guided and shaped by the International Association for Public Participation's (IAP2) core values and public participation spectrum, which are recognised internationally as best practice. These tools guide both the approach and practical application of stakeholder engagement.

Core values

1. Public participation is based on the belief that those who are affected by a decision have a right to be involved in the decision making process.
2. Public participation includes the promise that the public's contribution will influence the decision.
3. Public participation promotes sustainable decisions by recognising and communicating the needs and interests of all participants, including decision makers.
4. Public participation seeks out and facilitates the involvement of those potentially affected by or interested in a decision.
5. Public participation seeks input from participants in designing how they participate.
6. Public participation provides participants with the information they need to participate in a meaningful way.
7. Public participation communicates to participants how their input affected the decision.

Public Participation Spectrum

The IAP2 Public Participation Spectrum is a tool to define the role of stakeholders in any engagement process. It outlines the goal of each level of the spectrum and includes the 'promise to stakeholders' made when an organisation chooses to engage with them in a particular way.

Increasing impact on the decision 					
	Inform	Consult	Involve	Collaborate	Empower*
Engagement goal	To provide stakeholders with balanced and objective information to assist them in understanding the problem, alternatives, opportunities and/or solutions.	To obtain stakeholder feedback on analysis, alternatives and/or decisions.	To work directly with stakeholders throughout the process to ensure that their concerns and aspirations are consistently understood and considered.	To partner with stakeholders in each aspect of the decision including the development of alternatives and the identification of the preferred solution.	To place the final decision making in the hands of the stakeholders.
Promise to stakeholders	We will keep you informed.	We will keep you informed, listen to and acknowledge concerns and aspirations, and provide feedback on how stakeholder input influenced the decision.	We will work with you to ensure that your concerns and aspirations are directly reflected in the alternatives developed and provide feedback on how stakeholder input influenced the decision.	We will work together with you to formulate solutions and incorporate your advice and recommendations into the decisions to the maximum extent possible.	We will implement what you decide.

Legislation / Local Law Requirements

Section 1.3 (2) of the *Local Government Act 1995*.

Other Relevant Policies / Key Documents

P301: Advertising of Planning Proposals

P112: Community Advisory Groups

M103: Stakeholder Engagement

City of South Perth Strategic Community Plan 2021-2031