

Community Engagement Policy

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1. Document control

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Stakeholders (audience and engagement groups)	Communities, elected members, project officers, all staff
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Electronic version on the intranet or website is the controlled version.

2. Preamble

The contents of and the commitments that council makes in this policy are not intended to be and should not be interpreted to be any more than a statement of council's general position in relation to community engagement (public consultation) as required under the *Local Government Act 1999*.

The contents of this policy reflect council's approach to meeting its legislative responsibilities for providing opportunities for community input.

3. Policy purpose

The purpose of this policy is to fulfil council's statutory obligations under section 50 and 50A of the *Local Government Act 1999* and the Minister for Local Government's Community Engagement Charter (the Charter) published in the South Australia Government Gazette on 11 December 2025. This policy does not apply to public consultation or notification requirements of the *Planning, Development and Infrastructure Act 2016*.

The *Local Government Act 1999* (the Act) requires council in certain cases, to follow specific steps by way of public consultation, also known as community engagement.

It is acknowledged that any legislative requirement which affects council will take precedence over council's policies and procedures.

4. Scope

This policy applies to all legislated community engagement undertaken by council outlined in the Act and the Charter.

This policy is intended for use by all council employees, elected members, contractors and volunteers involved in the design, delivery, or evaluation of community engagement.

This policy excludes:

- non-legislated community engagement
- internal engagement with staff, which is managed through separate organisational policies and processes.

5. Definitions

Act	<i>Local Government Act 1999 (SA)</i>
Community	People who live, work, study, visit or do business in the City of Onkaparinga, and any stakeholders that may be affected by council decisions.
Community engagement	The process of seeking input or feedback from the community regarding a decision that may affect them. This includes any activity where council provides information on a decision or invites comment on a matter. For the purpose of this policy, community engagement and public consultation are one and the same.
Charter	The Minister for Local Government's Community Engagement Charter published in the South Australia Government Gazette on 11 December 2025.
Community Engagement Policy	A policy required under section 50 of the Act, which sets out how council must engage with the community when required by legislation.
Public consultation	See Community engagement.

6. Strategic context

Council is committed to supporting well-informed communities who are able to participate in council's democratic processes.

This policy supports council's legal responsibilities under sections 50 and 50A of the Act which require councils to have a Community Engagement Policy and consult with the community in certain situations.

7. Policy

This policy meets the requirements of the Act and the Charter, which requires councils to have a Community Engagement Policy and to follow it in certain circumstances.

The Act requires council in certain cases, as set out below, to follow specific steps by way of public consultation:

Significant—Annual Business Plan and rating policy

- Council's Annual Business Plan (section 123)
- Changing or amending council's rating policy (section 151)

Significant

- Representation reviews (section 12)
- Considering a change of status of council or name change (section 13)
- Strategic Management Plans (section 122)
- Differential rating and special adjustments (section 156)
- Revocation of classification of land as community land (sections 193 and 194)
- Community Land Management Plans - adoption (section 197)
- Community Land Management Plans – significant amendments (section 198)
- Alienation of community land by lease or license (section 202)
- Making bylaws (section 249)

Standard

- Substantial changes to the opening hours and place of council's principal office (section 45)
- Community Engagement Policy (section 50A)
- Council behaviour support policies (section 75F)
- Access to meetings and documents (section 92)
- Power to make orders (section 259)

Local

- Carrying out commercial activities - Prudential Arrangements (section 48)
- Council is proposing a permit or authorisation for alteration of a road or use of a road for business purposes – for more than 48 hours (with a detour in place) or where no detour will be available (section 223)
- Consultation on proposed planting of vegetation on a road – significant impact (section 232)

Inform

- Minor changes to opening hours and place of council's principal office (section 45)
- Council is proposing a permit or authorisation for alteration of a road or use of roads for business purposes - for less than 48 hours and the council ensures that a detour is in place (section 223)
- Election information (Section 13A of the *Local Government (Elections) Act 1999*)

When council is required to consult the community, we will comply with the mandatory requirements as detailed within the Act and the Charter.

Council may, in its absolute discretion, determine in relation to a matter for which it is required by the Act and/or the Charter to follow its community engagement policy, to undertake a step or steps in addition to those set out in this policy.

However, council is not required to consider and/or determine whether or not to undertake any additional step or steps in relation to such a matter before taking any action or making any decision in relation to such a matter.

8. Roles

ELECTED MEMBERS

Encourage participation

Support the promotion of engagement opportunities and encourage community members to actively participate in council's decision-making processes.

Consider feedback

Consider community feedback provided through official engagement processes alongside other influences on decision making (e.g. legislation, policy, resources, expert advice, previous decisions).

ADMINISTRATION

Plan and deliver engagements

Ensure engagement activities align with legislation and this policy.

Present feedback

Provide decision makers with clear, unbiased summaries of engagement outcomes, outlining how community views have informed any recommendation(s).

COMMUNITY MEMBERS

Participate in the engagement process

Participate in engagement opportunities in ways that suit their needs, noting that community views are one of several influences considered in council's decision making.

Provide local knowledge and lived experience

Relevant to council's decision-making process:

- Share local insights, experiences, stories and perspectives to support shared understanding.
- Provide feedback, ideas, support or sentiment to inform council's consideration of options, impacts and potential outcomes.

9. Relevant legislation and references

Local Government Act 1999 sections 50 and 50A

Minister for Local Government's Community Engagement Charter

Local Government (Elections) Act 1999 section 13A

10. Further information

This policy is available for inspection, downloading or printing from our website

www.onkaparingacity.com