

PROCEDURE – ADMINISTRATION

Community Engagement Procedure

CONTENTS

Document control 2

1. Purpose.....2

2. Strategic context 3

3. Scope 3

4. Definitions 4

5. Procedure 5

 5.1 Foundations.....5

 5.2 When and how we engage.....9

 5.3 Engagement methods and minimum standards 12

 5.4 Using what we hear 16

 5.5 Delivering and improving.....18

6. Relevant legislation and references 20

Appendix 1 Engagement Framework hierarchy and state government legislation.....22

Appendix 2 – Alignment to IAP2 Engagement Spectrum 23

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1. Purpose

The Community Engagement Procedure (the Procedure) describes how council staff plan, deliver, report on and evaluate community engagement to ensure our approach is consistent, flexible and current best practice.

The Procedure supports the Community Engagement Policy by outlining expectations and roles that help us:

- meet legislated requirements under section 50 and 50A of the Local Government Act 1999 (the Act), and the Minister for Local Government's Community Engagement Charter (the Charter) published in the South Australia Government Gazette on 11 December 2025
- deliver outcomes in line with the Community Vision 2034
- undertake good-practice engagement, considering best-practice approaches in line with the Engagement Institute (formerly the International Association of Public Participation, or IAP2) standards.

The Procedure excludes planning matters that are covered under the Planning, Development and Infrastructure Act 2016.

This Procedure does not limit professional judgement. Rather it provides a guide for staff to design engagement that is proportionate, inclusive, and aligned to legislative obligations and the expectations of elected members and the community.

2. Strategic context

Our approach to community engagement – as outlined in the Community Engagement Policy (the Policy) and this Procedure – supports delivery of the City of Onkaparinga Community Vision 2034 (the Vision) by providing a structured and consistent approach to involving the community in council decision-making.

Through its application, the Procedure helps ensure that community perspectives, local knowledge and lived experience are appropriately considered in the development of council strategies, services and projects, supporting outcomes that reflect community priorities and contribute to the long-term wellbeing of the city.

Community Vision 2034 goals

Leadership

Strong community voice

Amplify community voices, supporting their capacity to advocate for their interests and influence positive outcomes.

Increase capacity for active citizenship and future focused thinking.

Impact and trust

Increase people's participation in decision-making on matters that affect them.

Strengthen community confidence in democratic processes and government transparency.

Community

Connected, supportive communities

Increase opportunities for the participation of all in community life.

Livability

Great places

Increase the inclusivity and quality of spaces and places for the enjoyment of all.

3. Scope

The procedure applies to all council employees, elected members, contractors and volunteers involved in the design, delivery, or evaluation of community engagement. Legislated community engagement requirements under the Act are met through the Community Engagement Policy, this Procedure and any relevant statutory procedures. Where there is any inconsistency, statutory requirements take precedence.

4. Definitions

Active participation	Active participation is an engagement method used when we need to work together with stakeholders to understand needs, concerns and opportunities, especially for complex issues.
Community/ Community members	People who live, work, study, visit or have an interest in the City of Onkaparinga, including individuals, groups, businesses and organisations.
Community development	Strengthening capacity and connection to support people to live well by participating in and shaping local community life.
Community engagement	The process of informing stakeholders about decisions that affect them and, where possible, inviting community input to help shape and improve those decisions. Where appropriate, community engagement involves proactively seeking and understanding stakeholder's values, perspectives, concerns and aspirations, and integrating them into decision making processes. Engagement spans a spectrum - from sharing information about a decision and keeping people informed, to asking for feedback and using local knowledge to shape outcomes.
Consult	Consult is an engagement method used when there are options available and/or feedback is needed to help shape a decision.
Inform	Inform is an engagement method used when the purpose is to provide clear, accessible information to help people understand a decision, process or outcome.
Method	The engagement method is the way we will interact with stakeholders regarding a specific council decision (i.e. inform, consult, active participation). The method is chosen based on a range of factors including the likely impact of a decision, each stakeholder's level of interest, and their ability to influence the decision.
Minor (change to opening hours)	Temporary changes to operating hours and/or location of the principal place of office of council (Noarlunga Centre), such as holiday closure periods or the temporary relocation of office (such as in an emergency).
Petition	A formal request presented to Council in accordance with meeting procedures. Petitions are acknowledged but not included in engagement participation statistics.
Promapp	Council's process mapping system where the detailed community engagement process is documented.
Stakeholders	Individuals, groups, organisations or agencies who are affected by a decision or have an interest in the decision or outcome.
Substantial (changes to opening hours)	Longer term (greater than 12 months) or permanent changes of operational hours/location for the principal place of office of council (Noarlunga Centre). If the change is required to immediately protect the

	safety of the workers and community, then council will follow the steps for an inform approach.
Technique	The specific way(s) we will engage with stakeholders regarding a specific council decision. Techniques are selected based on the method chosen and carefully consider each group of stakeholders.
Techniques toolkit	Council's practical guide to engagement techniques, when to use them and accessibility considerations.
Unsolicited feedback	Feedback provided outside of official engagement channels (for example petitions, community-run surveys or social media comments). This information may be acknowledged but must not be counted as official engagement participation.
Your Say Onkaparinga	Council's online engagement platform used to share information, ask for feedback and provide project updates.

5. Procedure

5.1 Foundations

5.1.1 Community engagement promise

'We're committed to working with you to create a city that you're proud to live and work in.'

We are committed to ensuring we provide clear and objective information and offer opportunities for people to participate in decision making.

The promise describes what the community can expect when council conducts community engagement. It sets out our commitment to transparency, respect and genuine involvement in every engagement we deliver.

5.1.2 Community engagement principles

The Office of Local Government Community Engagement Charter (the Charter) sets out core principles that all South Australian councils must follow. We are committed to meeting those requirements. The principles below build on the Charter and reflect how our organisation puts community engagement into practice locally.

Staff will apply the following principles when planning, delivering, evaluating and reporting on engagement:

Principle 1: Clear and honest

We are upfront about what the community can and cannot influence.

How we deliver on this:

- Clearly explain why this matters, why we are engaging and decision boundaries of each project.
- Communicate constraints such as budget, legislation, safety or technical limits.
- Be explicit about what is negotiable and non-negotiable.
- Clearly outline how decisions will be made and who makes them.
- Provide clear and timely information about projects throughout the engagement process.
- Explain how community feedback will be used before engagement begins.

Principle 2: Inclusive and accessible

We create genuine opportunities for people to take part.

How we deliver on this:

- Build awareness of where and how to participate, including through Your Say Onkaparinga and other council communication methods, while testing new ways to reach people on issues that matter to them.
- Use a mix of engagement methods and techniques suited to the project and community.
- Offer both online and in-person ways to participate where appropriate.
- Share information in plain language and accessible formats.
- Actively seek input from a broad cross-section of the community, including people who do not usually participate.
- Monitor participation patterns and adjust our approach where certain groups are under-represented and identified as a key stakeholder.
- Provide reasonable timeframes for participation.
- Create simple, low-barrier ways for people to provide feedback, including when they are satisfied.
- Encourage respectful discussion and constructive feedback.
- Provide interpreting, translation and other support services where needed to help people participate.

Principle 3: We match the level of engagement to the level of impact

How we deliver on this:

- Engage early.
- Follow recognised best practice standards and guidance.
- Assess the significance and potential impact of each project.
- Select engagement methods and techniques that reflect the level of community influence.
- Use a consistent planning process for all engagement activities.
- Provide staff guidance, templates and training to support quality engagement.
- Co-ordinate engagement and communications to provide clear and consistent information.

Principle 4: We share what we heard, what we did, and why

We commit to reporting back on what we heard, how feedback was used and what we did.

How we deliver on this:

- Publish a Feedback Report for all engagements.
- Release a feedback summary within six weeks of engagement closing.
- Provide updates on how feedback was used, what changes resulted from the feedback and what action will be/has been taken.
- Clearly communicate how community views were considered in decisions.
- Explain the reasons for final decisions or actions.

Principle 5: We take responsibility and keep improving

We learn from every engagement and keep getting better.

How we deliver on this:

- Provide accurate information to support informed decision making.
- Consider the greater good and other influencing factors when decisions are being made
- Evaluate participation, inclusiveness, process, outcomes and trust.
- Use evaluation findings to improve future engagement practice.

5.1.3 Roles and responsibilities

This section outlines the roles and responsibilities of those involved in planning, delivering, reporting on, evaluating and supporting community engagement.

It ensures the engagement process is consistent, transparent, inclusive and aligned with the State Government's Act and Charter, council policy, the Community Engagement Framework, and this procedure.

Community engagement is led and delivered by the administration, with Elected Members responsible for considering the outcomes as part of their decision-making role. Maintaining this distinction supports the integrity, impartiality, and transparency of council's engagement processes.

5.1.3.1 Elected members

Elected Members are responsible for considering engagement outcomes as part of informed decision-making. To maintain the integrity and independence of engagement processes, Elected Members will:

- Promote council's official engagement opportunities through their networks (optional) and direct community members to provide input through approved engagement channels (e.g. Your Say Onkaparinga).
- Attend community engagement activities (optional) in an observational capacity, to listen and understand community views.
- Not lead, facilitate, or conduct independent engagement activities outside of council's endorsed processes.
- Not seek to influence, direct, or pre-determine engagement outcomes.
- Ensure personal views are clearly distinguished from official council positions at all times.
- If participating in engagement activities as a community member, do so in a private capacity and not as an Elected Member (including not using council-issued communication channels or representing their role).

When making decisions, Elected Members will:

- Consider engagement outcomes alongside other relevant factors, including legislative requirements, council policies, available resources, and risk considerations (e.g. safety, environmental, social, and financial impacts).
- Act in the interests of the broader community for the greater good, with regard to the long-term public benefit.
- Consider the needs and perspectives of different stakeholder groups and the potential impacts of decisions.
- Have regard to Council's Community Vision 2034 and associated strategic commitments.

5.1.3.2 Executive and directors

- Champion good engagement practice.
- Ensure their teams support early engagement, adequate time and resources for planning and delivering meaningful engagements.
- Approve engagement plans for high-impact/high-interest projects as required.
- Consider engagement findings alongside other influences when making decisions or determining recommendations to Council.
- Support staff to attend training and provide time for engagement and evaluation.

5.1.3.3 Engagement team

- Ensure engagement plans, activities and materials align with legislation, Policy, the Framework and this Procedure.
- Provide expert engagement advice, coaching, training and resources for staff.
- Partner with project teams on high-complexity or high-impact engagements as required.
- Develop and maintain engagement tools and templates.
- Support project teams to monitor, analyse and report on their engagement outcomes.
- Support community members to understand the decision-making process and how their feedback is considered alongside other factors.
- Regularly review council's engagement approach, set and monitor KPIs, analyse trends, report on engagement performance, and use any insights for continuous improvement.
- Maintain the Your Say Onkaparinga engagement platform.
- Maintain the engagement Promapp process and Techniques Toolkit.

5.1.3.4 Project leads/team

- Identify when engagement is needed and notify the Engagement team early in the planning phase.
- Work closely with the Engagement team as a project partner, and keep them informed throughout the project lifecycle.
- Develop an engagement approach in line with the engagement principles that supports meaningful participation, proportionate to the scale, risk, complexity and level of community interest and influence.
- Develop a Communication and Engagement Plan for their projects using the approved template, with support from the Engagement team as needed.
- Manage the approval process for the Communication and Engagement Plan and any related documents within their section's agreed protocols.
- Implement engagement techniques, ensuring messages are clear and accurate.
- Manage stakeholder relationships.
- Avoid influencing engagement outcomes.
- Work with their section's administration staff to implement engagement activities, such as mailouts, letter drops and community drop-in sessions.
- Participate in engagement techniques only as community members (optional) but never as staff (i.e. must not use an Onkaparinga email address if participating as a community member).

- Prepare Feedback Reports for each engagement using the approved template.
- Consider community feedback alongside other influences when preparing recommendations.
- Ensure decisions made are communicated back to stakeholders in a timely manner.
- Maintain accurate records of engagement planning, decisions, techniques and outcomes in line with the State Records Act and our [Information and Records Management Policy](#).

5.1.3.5 Communications team

- Collaborate with the Engagement and project teams to align messaging and clarify roles and responsibilities
- Provide advice and support regarding communication channels and promotion.
- Maintain consistency with our corporate brand, accessibility and writing guidelines.

5.1.3.6 Community members

Community members bring lived experience, local knowledge and diverse perspectives that support good decision-making. When we refer to community we mean everyone who lives, works in, visits or connects with our city.

- Relevant to council's decision-making, the community is encouraged to participate in council's engagement process in ways that suit their needs and interests.
- 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 to inform council decision making.
- Consider project information before sharing views constructively.
- Be courteous and respectful of other stakeholders, and recognise that not everyone will share the same views and opinions.
- Acknowledge that council must balance community feedback alongside other influences such as legislation, policy, available resources, safety, the greater good, and environmental or social impacts.
- Stay informed of project updates and outcomes through council's official communication channels.

5.2 When and how we engage

5.2.1 When engagement is required

Engagement should be considered when:

- identified within the Act, Charter, Policy or this Procedure
- community views, knowledge or lived experience will be beneficial in helping shape a project
- options exist and community preferences need to be understood
- risks, impacts or sensitivities require community involvement
- council has committed (via resolution, policy or practice) to seek input/undertake engagement
- the community has expressed strong interest or concern
- the topic affects the daily lives, safety, access or wellbeing of residents

- the topic is of high interest to stakeholders
- environmental, social or economic impacts are expected.

After considering the above, engagement may not be required when:

- the decision relates to legislative, governance or operational changes that do not result in a material impact on the community
- there is no meaningful opportunity for stakeholders to influence the decision
- confidentiality requirements apply (for example, procurement or safety).

Where engagement is not undertaken, project leads must record the reasons in the project file, including any legislative, safety, confidentiality or timing constraints.

If unsure whether engagement is required, staff should seek advice from the Engagement Team.

In 'inform-only' circumstances, staff will explain the decision, its impacts and how further information can be accessed — consistent with the 'Inform' definition.

5.2.2 Engagement process

Using a standardised engagement process ensures community engagement is consistent, transparent and aligned with governance requirements. When we ask for community feedback, the process generally follows these steps:

1. An opportunity is identified – a decision is needed.
2. The scope is defined – clarity on what can and cannot be influenced.
3. The engagement approach is planned – engagement method and techniques are chosen.
4. The community is invited to provide feedback.
5. The feedback is analysed – data is collated the data and presenting it in a way that supports good decision making.
6. A decision is made – consideration is given to input alongside other requirements such as budget, legislation and safety. The appropriate decision-maker reviews all information and makes an informed decision.
7. The outcome is shared with the community – the decision is explained including how feedback was considered.

The detailed internal community engagement process is documented in Promapp. Promapp outlines the required steps, roles, approvals and templates that support consistent and compliant engagement practice across the organisation. Staff must follow the Promapp process when planning and delivering engagement activities. Mandatory steps and approvals are identified in Promapp.

[View the process in Promapp](#)

5.2.3 Early engagement

Early engagement with stakeholders supports informed and accountable decision-making by identifying risks, incorporating local knowledge and clarifying expectations before options are finalised.

Engaging early strengthens trust, improves the quality of proposals and reduces the likelihood of conflict, delay or misunderstanding later in the process. The timing and scale of early engagement should be proportionate to the level of impact, complexity and community interest associated with the decision.

For example, in a playground renewal project, early engagement can involve seeking community input at the scoping stage to inform the design brief and clarify priorities.

A second stage of engagement may then test the draft concept with stakeholders to confirm it reflects community input and identify refinements prior to final decision-making.

5.2.4 Avoiding over-engagement

When planning engagement, staff must consider the cumulative impact of engagement on the community. This includes reviewing whether similar feedback has already been sought, whether existing information can inform the decision, other engagements happening concurrently, and whether the proposed engagement is necessary, proportionate and appropriately timed.

Engagement should be coordinated where possible to reduce duplication and avoid contributing to engagement fatigue.

5.2.5 Proportionate planning

Each engagement approach should be proportionate to:

- the level of community interest
- the level of influence the community can have
- the scale of impact
- the complexity of the project
- the level of reputational risk
- the resources available
- any political or media sensitivity.

5.2.6 Communication and Engagement Plan

A written Communication and Engagement Plan is required for all engagements that seek community feedback, or whenever a Your Say Onkaparinga page is proposed.

Plans should be brief, practical and – in line with the template – at a minimum include:

- background information/project scope
- any prior relevant engagements and what we already know
- purpose and objectives (aligned to decision points)
- negotiables/non negotiables
- engagement approach
- risks and mitigations
- methods and techniques
- key messages
- timeframes
- stakeholders.

To aid in stakeholder identification and assessment, a guideline has been developed to help staff identify and prioritise stakeholders for any project or business-as-usual activity including:

- accessibility and inclusion considerations
- reporting and feedback-loop approach.

Templates and examples are available from Compass or by contacting the Engagement Team.

Approval requirements

All Communications and Engagement Plans must be reviewed and approved through the relevant organisational area in line with internal approval processes before implementation.

Where a project is highly political, media sensitive or carries a high reputational risk, the Communications and Engagement Plan must also be reviewed and approved by the Manager Communication and Engagement before implementation. This provides an additional level of oversight for matters with elevated communications, engagement or reputational risk.

Where the approved engagement approach or techniques are later changed, removed or substantially amended, the Communications and Engagement Plan must also be resubmitted for further review and approval.

5.2.7 Designing for inclusion and accessibility

Engagement should be designed to remove barriers and enable participation from a broad cross-section of the community. Appropriate to each engagement, the Communications and Engagement Plan should consider:

- the use of plain language and accessible formats
- cultural appropriateness, including respectful engagement with First Nations peoples
- practical barriers to participation such as transport, digital access, timing, translation, sensory needs
- methods that are accessible for people with disability
- targeted approaches for under-represented groups.

Where appropriate, engagement may draw on recognised guidance and resources, including but not limited to:

- First Nations Community Engagement Industry Guide Phase 1
- Inclusive SA Toolkit: Engagement and Consultation with People Living with Disability
- Voice of the Child Toolkit.

5.3 Engagement methods and minimum standards

5.3.1 Engagement methods

The engagement methods align with best practice and the approaches outlined by the Engagement Institute, ensuring our engagements are consistent, and suited to the level of influence our community can have.

Staff should select the method or combination of methods that best suit the purpose, level of influence, complexity, community interest and project stage.

Inform

Inform is used when the purpose is to provide clear, accessible information to help people understand a decision, process or outcome.

Consult

Consult is used when there are options available and/or feedback is needed to help shape a decision.

Active participation

Active participation is used when we need to work together with stakeholders to understand needs, concerns and opportunities, especially for complex issues.

Staff may combine methods across categories if this supports the purpose of the engagement and is appropriate to the context.

5.3.2 Minimum engagement requirements

Some engagements must meet minimum requirements due to legislation, governance expectations or the nature of the project. These requirements ensure consistency, transparency and compliance across all engagement processes.

5.3.2.1 Legislated engagement requirements

When engagement is required under section 50 and 50A of the Local Government Act 1999 (the Act) and/or the Minister for Local Government's Community Engagement Charter published in the South Australia Government Gazette on 11 December 2025, or other legislation, council will ensure the requirements are as follows for the relevant categories:

Significant

- Publish information about the matter in a local news publication (print where available, but otherwise digital) that circulates in the council area and is not produced by the council.
- Publish information about the matter that can be easily found on a council website.
- Consider appropriate ways to promote the engagement opportunity to the whole council area (city wide).
- Explain the decision-making process and what influence the community can have on the decision-making process.
- Invite submissions and community feedback for a period of at least 21 days.
- Consider any feedback received before making a decision.
- Invite submitters who provided feedback through an official channel to attend the Council meeting and speak to their submission before a decision is made.
- Communicate the final decision to stakeholders.
- Undertake any additional requirements as identified within the approved Communications and Engagement Plan as appropriate.

Significant—annual business plan and rating policy

All of the above requirements as listed, and

- hold a public meeting, either as a part of a Council meeting or a separate event.

Standard

- Publish information about the matter that can be easily found on a council website.
- Consider appropriate ways to promote the engagement opportunity to the whole council area (city wide).
- Seek community feedback for an appropriate period of time, preferably no less than 14 days.
- Consider any feedback received before making a decision.
- Communicate the final decision to stakeholders.

- Undertake any additional requirements as identified within the approved Communications and Engagement Plan as appropriate.

Local

- Publish information about the matter that can be easily found on a council website.
- Consider appropriate ways to promote the engagement opportunity to the relevant stakeholders.
- Seek community feedback for an appropriate period of time, preferably no less than 14 days.
- Consider any feedback received before making a decision.
- Communicate the final decision to stakeholders.
- Undertake any additional requirements as identified within the approved Communications and Engagement Plan as appropriate.

Inform

- Publish information about the matter that can be easily found on a council website.
- Consider appropriate ways to share the information to the relevant stakeholders.
- Undertake any additional requirements as identified within the approved Communications and Engagement Plan as appropriate.

5.3.2.2 Land revocation and community land matters

In addition to the legislated engagement requirements listed above, staff are strongly encouraged to undertake in-person engagement with directly affected stakeholders in the vicinity of the proposed location.

5.3.2.3 Place based engagement

Where engagement is place-based or relates to a specific location, staff should use techniques that help directly affected people become aware of the engagement opportunity. At a minimum, signage must be erected at the site for the duration of the engagement period, unless this is not reasonably practicable.

5.3.2.4 Council run events where the event may impact business operations or access

For events delivered by council where the event may impact business operations or access, such as Beachside Food and Wine Festival, the administration will undertake the Standard engagement requirements as listed above. In addition to this, staff are encouraged to undertake proactive and direct contact methods with directly affected stakeholders in the vicinity of the proposed location, such as door knocking and/or direct communication. Where applicable, Business and Tourism Associations should also be directly contacted and provided the opportunity to meet and discuss any concerns.

5.3.2.5 All other projects and initiatives

For non-legislated projects, the minimum engagement requirements are identified on a case-by-case basis within the approved Communications and Engagement Plan.

While this section of the Procedure lists the minimum engagement requirements, other techniques may be undertaken in addition to this, based on the approved Communications and Engagement Plan. Aside from these minimum requirements, the engagement approach may be adjusted depending on the complexity, level of community impact and influence, and project needs.

5.3.2.6 Capital project costing statement

At its meeting on 8 November 2022, Council approved the Engagement Improvement Program Outcomes. As part of this, Council endorsed including a brief financial impact statement in engagement materials for relevant projects, covering project cost, and any impact on debt and rates. This supports greater transparency and helps the community understand the scale and financial context of proposed projects. For capital projects, this is reflected through a high-level costing statement relating to the capital works budget.

For capital projects, a project costing statement must be included to help the community understand the scale and nature of the investment. Costing information will:

- relate to the capital works budget only
- use plain, high-level expenditure descriptions (for example “This project is funded through council’s capital works program and external grant funding where applicable”).

5.3.3 Techniques

Staff can use a range of techniques to support the inform, consult and active participation methods.

The Techniques Toolkit provides detailed guidance on available techniques, including when to use them, accessibility considerations, resource needs and examples. Staff should refer to the toolkit when selecting the most appropriate activities for their engagement.

Techniques may include, but are not limited to:

- direct communication such as letters, emails and stakeholder meetings
- online tools such as surveys, quick polls, online forums (digital democracy) and Your Say Onkaparinga pages
- in-person opportunities such as pop-ups, drop-ins, workshops and walk-throughs
- visual or printed materials such as concept plans, maps, images, signage and FAQs
- targeted outreach to specific individuals or groups.

Using the selected method as a guide, staff may choose one or several techniques depending on the purpose of the engagement, the level of community influence, and the level of interest, impact or complexity. Avoid defaulting to surveys for all ‘consult’ engagements and consider a range of other methods.

Please refer to the [Techniques Toolkit](#) for more techniques and further information.

5.3.4 Use of trusted local places and existing community networks

Staff should consider using trusted local places and existing community networks when planning engagement techniques. This can help improve reach, accessibility and participation, particularly for place-based projects or where standard council channels may not effectively reach those affected. This may include working through familiar community venues, local groups, service providers, schools, sporting clubs or other established networks.

5.3.5 Survey design principles

Surveys should be designed to match the purpose, scope and significance of the engagement. Staff should set reasonable expectations for survey length and complexity and avoid asking for more detail than is necessary. Where appropriate, surveys should include simple or quick participation options, such as short response formats, multiple-choice questions or other low-barrier ways to contribute, to make it easier for more people to take part.

5.3.6 Your Say Onkaparinga

Council's online engagement platform, Your Say Onkaparinga, is generally used for broad community engagement opportunities. Where a matter is highly localised, place-based or primarily relevant to a specific stakeholder group, the online engagement platform may not be an appropriate engagement technique. In these cases, targeted engagement techniques such as door knocking, on-site meetings or community meetings should be considered to ensure the approach is proportionate, fit for purpose and focused on those most affected.

5.4 Using what we hear

5.4.1 Feedback report

A Feedback Report will be prepared for all engagements that sought feedback.

The report must:

- summarise what we heard
- be clear and unbiased
- outline themes, sentiment and community knowledge
- identify issues or risks raised
- note participation data received through all official channels and available demographics
- be provided to decision makers to be considered along with other influences (legislation, policy, technical advice, available resources, environmental/social/economic context).

When preparing the Feedback Report, staff will:

- use the Feedback Report template provided on the [Engagement page](#) on Compass
- separate official engagement data from unsolicited and unofficial community feedback, such as petitions, community-run surveys and social media comments, including:
 - excluding any unofficial community feedback from participation statistics
 - if it is to be included, ensure any unofficial community feedback is included as appendices only, with explanation of limitations (refer unsolicited feedback)
- note where misleading or incorrect external materials may have influenced the feedback received
- include Facebook reach, impressions, likes, shares and comments as promotion metrics, but not include them as engagement participation.

5.4.2 Unsolicited feedback

Unsolicited and community-driven feedback, such as petitions, community-run surveys and social media comments has the potential to misrepresent community sentiment and skew statistics and must be treated as unofficial feedback outside of the engagement process.

On receipt of community-driven or unsolicited feedback council will manage this in the following way:

- petitions or community-run engagement activities may be acknowledged in the Feedback Report but are not included in the official engagement statistics
- petitions must follow the formal process of being presented to Council as part of an agenda, refer to the [corporate website](#) or speak to Civic Governance for more information
- unofficial feedback cannot be counted because participants may:

- have also used official channels (creating duplication)
- not be identifiable or local
- have provided feedback without access to accurate project information
- have provided feedback based on inaccurate or misleading information
- staff and elected members must encourage all participants to use official channels to ensure informed, accessible and non-duplicated feedback.

5.4.3 Privacy and data integrity

We manage engagement data in line with the *Privacy Act 1988*, Australian Privacy Principles, council's Privacy Policy and Records Management Policy.

Staff will:

- collect only the personal information required to support engagement
- store personal information securely and protect it from unauthorised use or modification
- remove identifying information before reviewing or reporting engagement data
- redact names and contact details of individuals in public documents
- publish full contributions from organisations (e.g. community groups or businesses) where information is already public
- use email addresses only for engagement updates and project information
- check privacy and security requirements before using third-party tools or directing the public to external websites
- ensure all data is accurate, complete and saved in approved systems.

Approval requirements

Before publication all Feedback Reports must be reviewed and approved through the relevant organisational area in line with internal approval processes.

Where a project is highly political, media sensitive or carries a high reputational risk, the Feedback Report must also be reviewed by the Manager Communication and Engagement before publication.

5.4.4 Closing the loop

Staff must tell engagement participants:

- what we heard
- the decision made
- what changed or didn't change and why
- next steps and timelines.

Techniques for this may include Your Say updates, letters, email newsletters, website updates, signage, or direct contact. Consider the way stakeholders participated in the engagement when closing the loop with them.

Consider publishing the Feedback Report in full, to support closing the loop for engagements on Your Say Onkaparinga.

5.4.5 Influences on decision-making

Decision-makers must consider engagement outcomes presented in the Feedback Report including stakeholder opinions, knowledge and expertise alongside other influences. Other influences on decision-making can include but are not limited to:

- existing legislation and policies
- previous Council decisions
- Community Vision 2034 and strategies
- legal or expert advice
- environmental, social and economic context
- broader community benefit
- research and analysis
- available resources
- decision makers' local knowledge.

To find out more about decision-making please refer to [Strategic decision making guide](#)

5.4.6 Considering broader community benefit

Council decisions must consider both the views of directly affected stakeholders and the broader interests of the wider community.

While people living closest to a project may experience the most immediate impacts, some council decisions provide benefits that extend beyond a single street, neighbourhood or interest group.

Decision makers therefore must consider community feedback alongside broader community benefit and long-term outcomes for the city.

In some situations, feedback from directly affected stakeholders may differ from the views or needs of the wider community. When this occurs, decision makers must balance these perspectives alongside other influences including legislation, strategic priorities, safety, environmental outcomes and available resources.

This approach helps ensure council decisions support the long-term wellbeing of the whole community.

5.5 Delivering and improving

5.5.1 Engagement evaluation

We evaluate engagement activities to understand community experience and identify opportunities to improve how we plan, design, deliver and report.

An organisational KPI and target has been set for measuring engagement success. The KPI is:

“How easy was it to provide feedback?” Target: >80% selecting “easy”.

To ensure engagement evaluation is undertaken staff will:

- ensure where online surveys and feedback tools are available, participants are invited to complete a short, optional evaluation at the end of their contribution
- review evaluation results to identify and report on improvement opportunities and next steps
- summarise key insights in the Feedback Report where relevant

- report annually on the organisational KPI.

5.5.2 Training and capability

5.5.2.1 Engagement team credentials

The Engagement team provide specialist advice and support staff across the organisation to ensure high-quality, best practice engagement. Staff working as Community Engagement Advisers are expected to hold relevant qualifications and capabilities.

Community Engagement Advisers should have:

- a certificate-level qualification in engagement (or equivalent recognised training)
- knowledge of engagement principles, methods and best practice
- strong skills in communication, facilitation and stakeholder relationships
- experience in planning and delivering engagements for projects, programs or policy
- the ability to analyse engagement data and prepare clear reports for decision makers.

It is beneficial for Community Engagement Advisers to also hold qualifications or experience in areas such as:

- project management
- relationship management
- behaviour change, community development or social research
- conflict resolution or facilitation
- strategic communication
- training and assessment.

Continuous professional development is encouraged to ensure engagement practice remains current, inclusive, and aligned with organisational expectations.

5.5.2.2 Internal training program

The Engagement team provides:

- internal training on legislation, policy and frameworks relating to engagement.
- tools, templates, techniques and best-practice examples
- coaching for staff and teams
- ongoing updates as legislation evolves.

Mandatory (all staff)

The staff onboarding session(s) on commencement includes a video with an overview of community engagement.

The training covers:

- What is community engagement?
- Meet the Engagement team.

Project leads, leaders and identified workers

A quarterly detailed Engagement Framework session is held both in-person and online. These sessions are assigned to workers where their position requirements identify community engagement responsibilities and/or where a leader has workers with these

responsibilities reporting to them. These deeper-dive training sessions are available to all staff through One Council, and cover:

- legislative requirements
- why community engagement is important
- our approach and the Community Engagement Framework (methods, tools and techniques)
- engagement process
- role of project lead and role of Engagement Team
- how to use the templates and overview of the Techniques Toolkit.

Ad-hoc sessions

Ad-hoc sessions in engagement, techniques and case studies are offered to support staff development in community engagement, including making best use of the Your Say Onkaparinga platform.

One on one support

One on one support is available to aid staff new to community engagement or learning a new technique. Individual support is aligned to the staff members' specific development needs.

5.5.3 Continuous improvement

The Engagement Team will:

- monitor emerging methods and tools
- review engagement evaluation data and insights
- refine templates
- support organisational learning
- adapt the Policy and Procedure to align with any legislative changes
- undertake a review of our engagement approach and key engagement documents as required.

6. Relevant legislation and references

Local Government Act 1999 (SA)

Community Engagement Policy

Community Vision 2034

Office of Local Government: Community Engagement Charter (published in the South Australia Government Gazette on 11 December 2025)

Privacy Act 1988 (Commonwealth)

State Records Act 1997 (SA)

First Nations Community Engagement Industry Guide Phase 1

Inclusive SA Toolkit: Engagement and Consultation with People Living with Disability

Information and Records Management Policy

Privacy Policy

Techniques toolkit (internal)

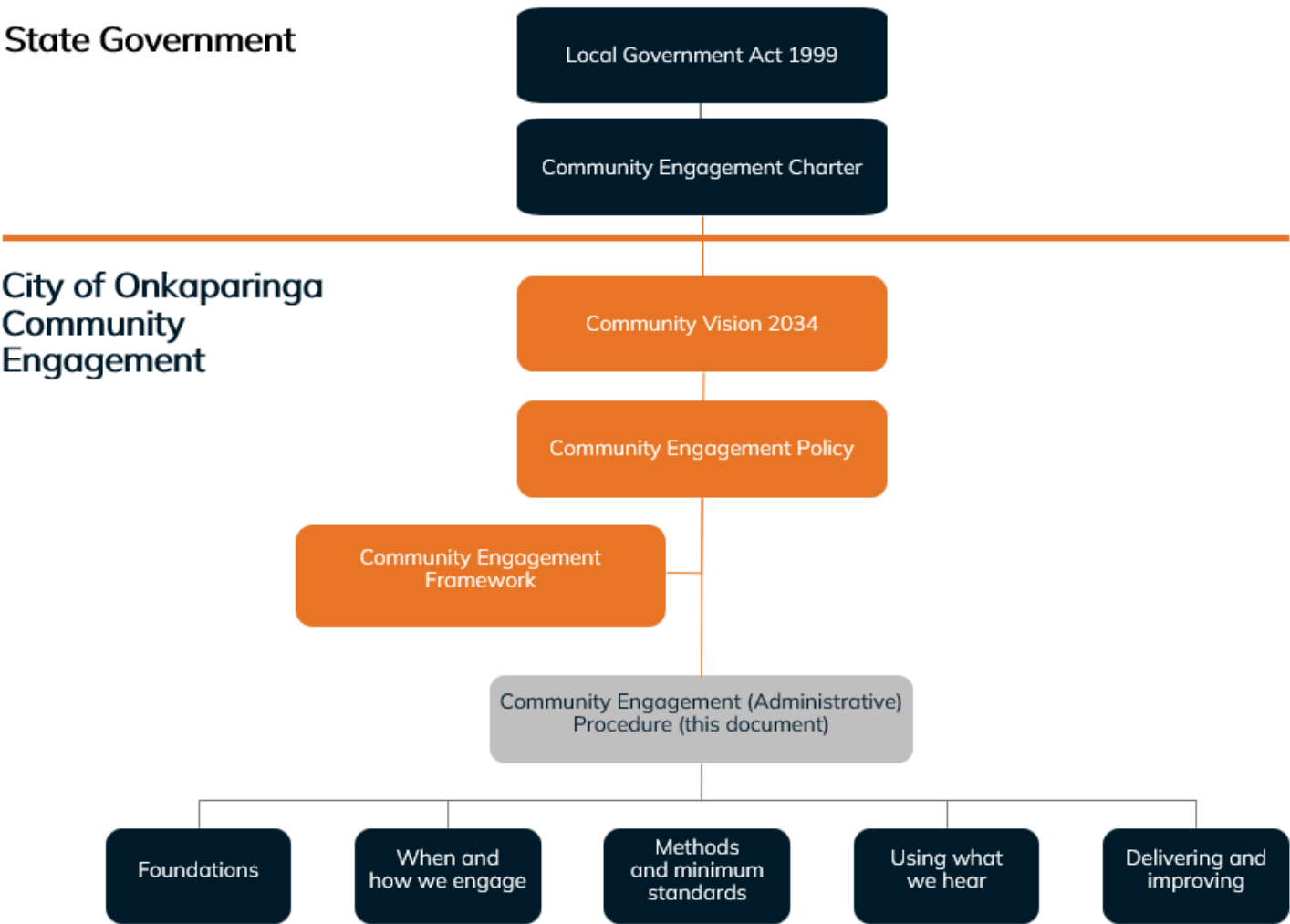
Promapp – community engagement process (internal)

Your Say Onkaparinga guidelines

[Strategic decision making guide](#)

Appendix 1 – Engagement Framework hierarchy and state government legislation

Community Engagement Framework



Appendix 2 – Alignment to Engagement Institute’s engagement spectrum

Council's approach to stakeholder engagement is built upon the Engagement Institute (formerly IAP2) spectrum. The Spectrum for Public Participation is an internationally recognised platform used to provide guidance to the public service, not for profit sector, private industry and communities.

The matrix in Figure 1 is based on the Engagement Institute Public Participation Spectrum. It shows that the level of engagement should match the project's purpose, timeframes and available resources. As a project evolves, the level of engagement may change.

Figure 1.

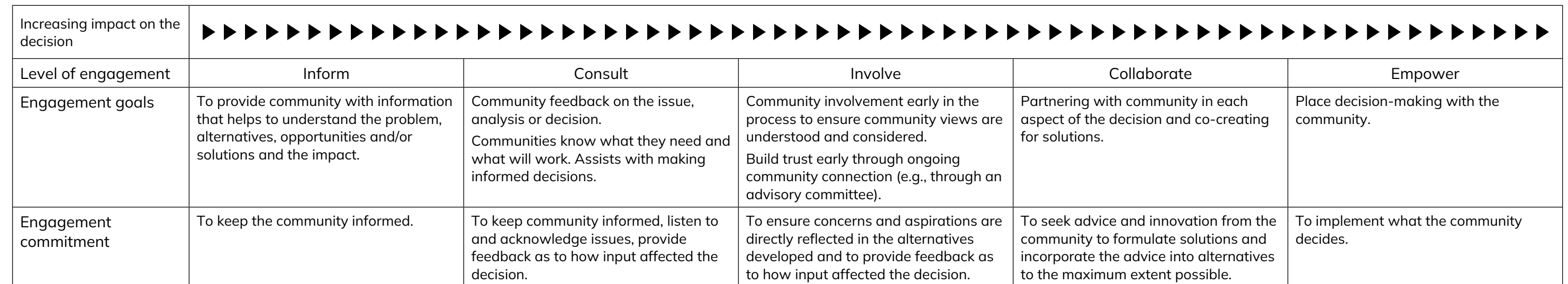


Figure 2 outlines the City of Onkaparinga’s engagement methods and demonstrates how they align with the levels of the IAP2 Public Participation Spectrum. Mapping our methods in this way shows our commitment to recognised best practice and ensures our approach is consistent with established engagement standards.

While our methods align with the IAP2 Public Participation Spectrum, the higher levels of the Spectrum must be considered within the context of local government responsibilities. Elected members remain the decision-makers under legislation, and not all decisions can be delegated to the community. As a result, opportunities to collaborate or empower will depend on the nature of the project, the level of risk and statutory obligations. For clarity and simplicity, the “Involve”, “Collaborate” and “Empower” levels are combined in our model. In practice, all levels reflect early engagement and a higher degree of community influence. Combining them provides clearer expectations for the community while maintaining meaningful opportunities to shape outcomes.

Figure 2.

Increasing impact on the decision					
IAP2 level of engagement	Inform	Consult	Involve	Collaborate	Empower
City of Onkaparinga engagement method	Inform	Consult	Active Participation		
	Informing is used when the purpose is to provide clear, accessible information to help people understand a decision, process or outcome.	Consultation is used when there are options available and/or feedback is needed to help shape a decision.	Active participation is used when we need to work together with stakeholders to understand needs, concerns and opportunities, especially for complex issues.		
When we use this method	We will inform when: - a decision is made for legislative, financial environmental, or technical reasons - there is no opportunity to influence the outcome.	We will consult when: - input is required on concepts or designs - there are several options available - final decisions are being shaped - issues and concerns are unclear.	We will use active participation when: - we need community knowledge to influence the decision - there is likely to be a high level of interest - we need stakeholders to talk with us and each other about complex issues.		
What we will do	We will explain: - how the decision was made - what’s going to happen - impact of the decision - where further information can be found.	We will ask: - are there any ideas to improve this? - which option is preferred? - what would the impact be?	We will ask: - what would people like to see happen? - what have we not considered or are not aware of? - how should we proceed with this?		