

# NARRANDERA SHIRE

## COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT STRATEGY

### 2025





### **Acknowledgement of Traditional Custodians**

Narrandera Shire Council respectfully acknowledges the Traditional Custodians of the land, the Wiradjuri peoples and pays respect to their Elders, past, present and emerging.

**[narrandera.nsw.gov.au](http://narrandera.nsw.gov.au)**



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The *Local Government Act 1993* requires Council to have a Community Engagement Strategy to support the development of all plans, policies, programs and key activities such as the Community Strategic Plan.

This Community Engagement Strategy is a formal expression of Council's commitment to undertake meaningful engagement with the Narrandera Shire community through the use of appropriate, effective and inclusive practices in the development, adoption and review of its strategic documents.





Narrandera Shire  
Council



  
**Narrandera**  
Shire Council

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# SCOPE

Narrandera Shire Council is committed to a process of meaningful communication, including full and transparent consideration of input and response to community members engaged in the process using the following social justice principles:

1. Equity
2. Access
3. Participation
4. Rights

Community engagement does not replace the decision-making functions of Council. Rather this is designed to assist in the decision-making process ensuring that Council has access to a broad range of information, feedback, opinions before decisions are made. Examples of community engagement include informing the community through face-to-face interaction, using the website of Council, social media, digital communication such as email public or traditional media such as printed material or television or radio.

# OBJECTIVE

Within the Community Strategic Plan titled 'Our Narrandera Shire 2034', Theme 5 contains two aspirations for 'Our Civic Leadership' being:

1. Have a Council that provides leadership through actions and effective communications.
2. Promote a community spirit that encourages volunteerism and values effective partnerships.

Narrandera Shire Council supports the spectrum of engagement activities as advocated by the International Association for Public Participation (IAP2), which includes five levels of engagement being:

1. Inform
2. Consult
3. Involve
4. Collaborate
5. Empower

IAP2's Public Participation Spectrum is designed to assist with the selection of the level of participation that defines the public's role in any community engagement program. The Spectrum shows that differing levels of participation are legitimate depending on the goals, time frames, resources and levels of concern in the decision to be made.



# STATEMENT

Narrandera Shire Council will inform the community about Council decisions, and engage with residents during the development of plans, policies and projects that have the potential to affect the Narrandera Shire community by ensuring that both identified stakeholders and general stakeholders:

1. are informed on issues and decisions that could significantly impact them
2. are given opportunities to have their say on Council issues, in a way and at a time that suits them, and
3. can be certain their views and advice have been genuinely considered before decisions are made.

Council is committed to ensuring that its decision-making process is open, trustworthy and accountable.

Council business papers, minutes and live streamed recordings of meetings will be available both online through Council's website.

## WHAT IS COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT?

**Community engagement is a planned process with the specific purpose of working with individuals and groups to encourage active involvement in decisions that affect them or are of interest to them.**

The outcomes of community engagement activities are better decisions that result in improved policy, facilities, and services, as well as greater community satisfaction and wellbeing.





# THE SPECTRUM OF ENGAGEMENT

Community engagement occurs for a variety of reasons and across a broad range of Council areas, such as planning, service delivery, infrastructure design, strategies, plans and more. You can see when are required by law to engage in the Legislative Requirements section. The Narrandera Shire uses the International Association of Public Participation (IAP2) *Spectrum of Engagement* to guide our planning.

The IAP2 Spectrum is a useful, widely recognised tool that identifies five levels of participation. For each level, there is a corresponding goal, commitment, and role for Council and the community in the process. There may often be more than one level of engagement used across a project, depending on the stage, scope, timeline, and stakeholders involved, as well as the influence and impact identified.

	INFORM	CONSULT	INVOLVE	COLLABORATE	EMPOWER
Goal	To provide our community with objective and clear information that lets them know when something is happening, or about to happen.	To seek and consider community feedback on alternatives, proposals and/or decisions we need to make.	To work directly with our community throughout the process to ensure that your concerns and aspirations are understood, considered and incorporated where appropriate.	To partner closely with our community in identifying alternatives, developing solutions and co-designing a jointly agreed outcome.	To place final decision making in the hands of our community, build their capacity to identify solutions and lead or deliver change.
Our commitment to the community	We will keep you informed.	We will listen to and acknowledge your concerns and aspirations and provide feedback on how your input influenced the decisions.	We will work with you to ensure what we've heard is directly reflected in the alternatives developed and provide feedback on how your input influenced the decisions.	We will work together in co-designing solutions, and as much as possible, incorporate your advice and proposals into the decisions.	We will work alongside you to realise your decisions and aspirations.
The role of community	Listen	Contribute	Participate	Partner	Partner or lead
Engagement type	Informative	Consultative	Deliberative	Deliberative	Deliberative

## Inform

Council initiatives to inform its community during the development, implementation and review of strategic documents will include:

1. Use of Council's website at [www.narrandera.nsw.gov.au](http://www.narrandera.nsw.gov.au).
2. The use of traditional print media such as notices in the Narrandera Argus (or other relevant newspaper), newsletters, signage or other material relative to the consultation.
3. Social media including the Facebook page of Council and other social media platforms such as Instagram and LinkedIn.
4. Media releases.
5. Direct mail-outs.

## Consult

Council will actively seek the views of its community and facilitate the exchange of ideas and information.

Council provides a number of opportunities for the community to directly participate in community consultation – an example of this was the recent development of the new Community Strategic Plan adopted in June 2022 titled 'Our Narrandera Shire 2034' and the Disability Inclusion Action Plan 2022-2026.

Consultation initiatives may include but not limited to:

1. Face-to-face discussions
2. Surveys
3. General feedback sought
4. Draft documents placed on public exhibition for a minimum of 28 days unless there is a legislative provision to vary this period of time
5. The receipt of either written submissions or digital submissions on public exhibition documents
6. The Narrandera Shire Community Survey – usually held early in the year of an ordinary Council election
7. The opportunity for members of the public to address the public forum at the beginning of each monthly Council meeting



## **Involve**

When dealing with an issue or matter that has significant impact on identified groups, Council has the opportunity to work directly with the community by bringing stakeholders into the decision-making process.

Council may seek direct input from Council committees, working groups, community committees or other groups and seek recommendations.

Groups may include but not limited to:

1. Community Forums
2. Community Reference Group
3. Section 355 Committees or Advisory Groups.

## **Collaborate**

Similarly, when dealing with difficult issues Council will partner with the community during each aspect of the decision-making process including the development of alternatives where possible and guidance to the best solution and outcomes.

## **Empower**

Examples of empowerment in engagement include:

1. Council elections.
2. Referendums
3. Deliberative processes to understand community attitudes and issues to a broad scale issue or project and may consider trade off scenarios.

# Project Assessment Tool

A Project Assessment Tool should be used - a template is provided below:

## ACTIVITY

### Step 1

List all the individuals and groups potentially affected by this project/program/ initiative (known as the stakeholders). Consider each of these stakeholders as you answer the questions in Step 2.

**Step 2** If yes, the OLG requires evidence of community engagement, regardless of score above.

Answer the following questions and add up the total score.

### TITLE OF PROJECT/PROGRAM/INITIATIVE:

Indicate either 1 - 5 from the scale below:

← 1	2	3	4	5 →
Not applicable to my project	No	I don't know	Maybe	Yes

	QUESTION	RESPONSE FROM SCALE	COMMENT
1	Do you need to understand the community's needs and/or ideas?		
2	Does the project/ program/ initiative have the potential to impact on the reputation of Council positively or negatively?		If yes, how?
3	Is there a potential for community interest?		
4	Has this project/ program/ initiative or physical location have a history or sensitivity?		If yes, how?
5	Is there a likelihood of a particular group being interested in this matter?		if yes, what history?
6	Is there a likelihood of a particular group being interested in this matter?		If yes, name group(s)



	QUESTION	RESPONSE FROM SCALE	COMMENT
7	Is there a potential impact on vulnerable or minority groups?		If yes, what is this impact?
8	Is there a regulatory requirement for community engagement on this matter?		If yes, which legislation and sections?
9	Does the project/program/initiative have potential financial implications that may impact on stakeholders?		If yes, estimate the monetary impact.
10	Does the project/program/initiative have potential financial implications that may impact on Council?		If yes, estimate the monetary impact.
11	Is there potential disruption for stakeholders?		
12	Is there potential for stakeholders to perceive that they will be disadvantaged by this project/program/initiative?		
13	Will stakeholders have additional obligations/responsibilities as a result of this project/program/initiative?		
14	Is there political interest at Federal, State, Regional or local level?		
15	Has there been media interest so far?		
16	Is there a key motivational driver for this project/program/initiative?		If yes, please name
17	Has there already been interest in this project/program/initiative so far?		If yes, please comment
<b>TOTAL</b>			
Note: Does the project/program/initiative meet the criteria for an Office of Local Government (DLG) Capital Expenditure review? (Cost is > 10% of annual rates revenue)		If yes, the OLG requires evidence of community engagement, regardless of score above.	

### Step 3

Discuss your responses with your colleagues and Deputy General Manager to determine whether community engagement may be required, and if so, the level of engagement necessary (as identified through the IAP2 Spectrum of Public Participation).

SCORE	ACTION
<40	Consider any questions that scored a '5', and assess the level of engagement required, (consult IAP2 Spectrum of Public Participation). Present your responses to Step 1, 2 and 3 to your Manager or Deputy General Manager for sign off, action and placement into ERDMS.
40-50	Community/stakeholder engagement may be required. Consider any questions that scored a '5', and assess the level of engagement required, (consult IAP2 Spectrum of Public Participation in the Procedure). Discuss with your Manager or Deputy General Manager to determine the most appropriate engagement type.
50+	Community/stakeholder engagement is required. Discuss with colleagues to determine the most appropriate engagement type (consult IAP2 Spectrum of Public Participation in the Procedure). Provide this recommendation to your Manager or Deputy General Manager and if appropriate, refer the engagement type to Council through the Executive Leadership Team.





# LEVEL OF IMPACT

All strategic planning and major projects, programs and new initiatives are assessed using the IAP2 Spectrum of Public Participation to determine the level of community engagement required.

This process is to be used when planning the year's works program, service programs and exhibition scheduling but can also be very useful for lesser significant projects where risks are identified and or where there is a requirement to assess and understand community needs.

# DEFINITIONS

- **Community engagement:** also referred to as 'public participation'.
- **IAP2:** International Association of Public Participation.
- **NSC:** Narrandera Shire Council.
- **Public participation:** involving those who are affected by a decision in the decision-making process. It promotes sustainable decisions by providing participants with the information they need to be involved in a meaningful way, and it communicates to participants how their input affects the decision (source: IAP2 - Australasia).

# ROLE AND RESPONSIBILITIES

## **General Manager / Deputy General Manager / Managers**

The General Manager, Deputy General Managers and Managers are to ensure all strategic planning and major projects, programs and new initiatives are assessed using the Community Engagement Procedure.

## **Governance & Engagement Manager**

To update this strategy in accordance with Section 402A of the Local Government Act 1993 and the Integrated Planning & Reporting documents issued by the Office of Local Government in September 2021.

## **Communications Officer**

Oversee the community engagement framework to build organisation capacity and practice through provision of advice, resources, and tools, and build and maintain place-based relationships with community. Ensure community engagement planning and delivery is consistent with this policy.

# CURRENT STRATEGIES AND PLANS

Our strategies outline the course of actions needed to achieve Council goals.

Council's current strategies and plans are:

COUNCIL POLICY	DEPARTMENT
Buy Local Shop Local Strategy	Economic Development
Buy Local Use Local Strategy	Economic Development
Climate Action Strategy	Development and Environment
Companion Animal Management Plan	Development and Environment
Community Engagement Strategy	Communications
Corporate Communications Strategy	Communications
Economic Development Strategy	Economic Development
Information Management Strategy	Information Technology
Local Housing and Employment Zone Land Strategy	Development and Environment
Narrandera Arts and Community Centre Strategic Plan	Arts and Culture
Narrandera Positive Ageing Strategy	Arts and Culture
Youth Strategy	Community Support



## RELATED LEGISLATION

- *Local Government Act 1993*
- *Local Government (General) Regulation 2021*

## RELATED POLICIES AND DOCUMENTS

- Community Strategic Plan 'Our Narrandera Shire 2034' – adopted 21 June 2022
- POL047 Media and Public Relations Policy – adopted June 2021
- POL056 Social Media Policy – adopted 21 June 2021
- Community Participation Plan – Planning - adopted November 2019
- IAP2 International Association for Public Participation guidelines [www.iap2.org.au](http://www.iap2.org.au)

## VARIATION

Council reserves the right to review, vary or revoke this strategy in accordance with legislation, regulation and award changes, where applicable. Council may also make changes to this strategy and the relevant procedures from time-to-time to improve the effectiveness of its operation.