



**2023 - 2027**

# **COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT STRATEGY**

**(INCLUDING COMMUNITY PARTICIPATION PLAN)**







# Acknowledgement of Country

We acknowledge the Wiradjuri people who are the traditional custodians of the land on which we live, work and play. We pay our respects to Elders past, present and emerging of the Wiradjuri Nation and thank them for their care of the land, water and sky and extend that respect to other indigenous Australians.

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# Vision, Purpose and Values

## OUR VISION

Creating community  
for today and tomorrow

## OUR PURPOSE

Lead, Connect, Deliver

## OUR VALUES





# Mayor's Message

Dubbo Regional Council (DRC) shares the community's passion and pride throughout the region. Council is committed to work with the community to preserve the regions lifestyle, its natural environment, its rural landscape and, as partners, make better decisions. Council's professional staff guide participants as they strive to achieve their aspirations for the region. This will provide support and result in self development opportunities through their role as partners in decision making.

This strategy sets out a whole-of-council commitment to community engagement where the community will be:

- ✓ encouraged to make recommendations to Council;
- ✓ informed about issues and decisions that could significantly affect their future;
- ✓ able to raise issues and have their say, in a way and at a time that suits them; and
- ✓ confident that their views have been considered and will have access to feedback.

Council's responsibility is to work in the best interests of the region as a whole and to consider a broad cross-section of views. Councillors can then fulfil their role as elected representatives and make better final decisions. In making the final decision they will be guided on policy, legal and statutory matters by professional staff.

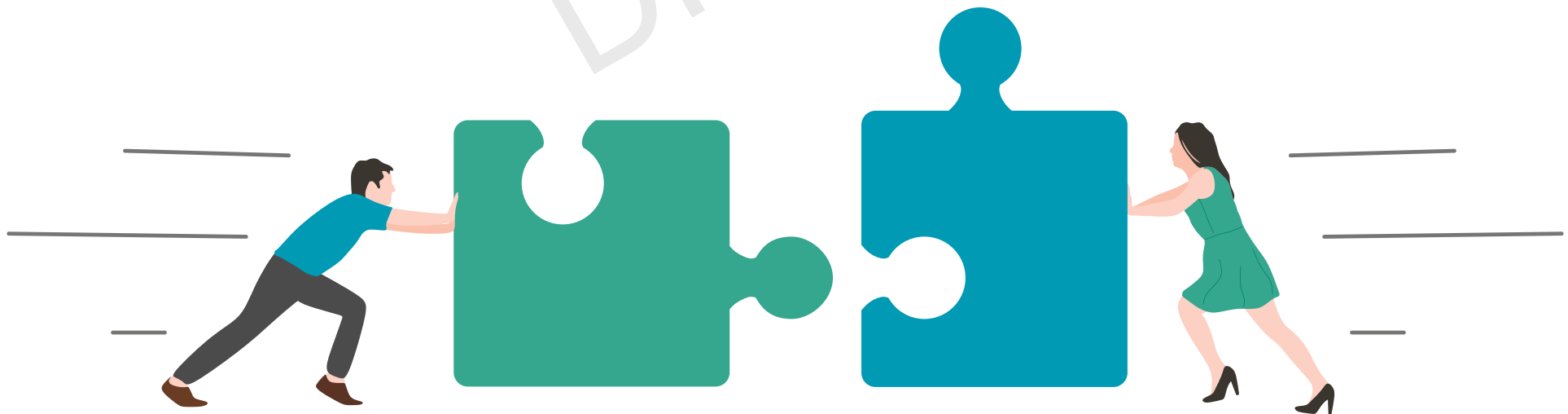
The priorities for DRC will differ. The complexity of issues will differ. The format of engagement will be tailored to ensure that input from the community delivers a workable outcome.



# About the Strategy

This strategy is designed to identify, guide and measure engagement activities in line with best practice, community expectations and relevant legislation. Community engagement does not replace the decision making powers of elected Councillors or the appointed Chief Executive Officer however it plays an important role in the decision-making process, ensuring community feedback, input, ideas and priorities are captured.

Development of an endorsed framework will support shared understanding with all stakeholders around policies and practices to ultimately support better engagement, increased community participation and informed decision making. This shared understanding is centred on the premise that community participation is critical to effective, community centric decision making. This shared understanding must also extend to times where community involvement in a decision making process may be minimal and the engagement approach is focused more on informing and educating the community on a decision making process and outcome.



# Strategy Link to Adopted Community Strategic Plan

As part of Council's Integrated Planning and Reporting Framework the activities of Council are guided at a strategic level by the Community Strategic Plan, known as Towards 2040. This Plan outlines community's long term vision for the region, and it is supported by a rolling four year delivery program and one year operational plan.

Towards 2040 includes several priorities relevant to this engagement strategy, including:

**Objective 4.1** – Council provides transparent, fair and accountable leadership and governance

**Strategy 4.1.1** – Council encourages and facilitates two-way communication with and between stakeholders and the community

**Strategy 4.1.2** – Council's decision making processes are open, transparent and accountable.

The 2022/2023 Delivery Program and Operational Plan identified the preparation and implementation of a Community Engagement Strategy that recognises engagement requirements when developing plans, policies and programs to ensure this framework is in line with contemporary community expectations.



# Legislative Requirements

Council must comply with several pieces of legislation that set out when we must initiate consultation. The Local Government Act 1993 requires Council to establish and implement a strategy (Community Engagement Strategy) for engagement with the local community when developing its plans, policies and programs and for the purpose of determining activities (other than routine administrative matters).

The Environmental Planning and Assessment Act 1979 also requires all Councils to outline how and when the community will be engaged across planning functions like policy-making and assessment. Our Community Engagement Strategy, including Community Participation plan, has been developed in accordance with these requirements, as well as those set out in the Local Government Act 1993.

The strategy will be reviewed every four years at a minimum and made available at [dubbo.nsw.gov.au](http://dubbo.nsw.gov.au)

## Census data

This strategy has considered and responded to the Council's Local Government Areas 2021 Australian Bureau of Statistics Census data.





# Thanks to Our Community

This page has been intentionally left blank for inclusion of feedback throughout the public exhibition period.

# About the Dubbo Region



The Dubbo Regional Council Local Government Area (LGA) shines as a dynamic, thriving activity centre nestled in the heart of New South Wales' Central West Orana Region.

Covering 7,900 square kilometres, the Dubbo Regional Council LGA extends from Eumungerie in the north, Kerr Creek in the south, Twelve Mile in the east and Minore in the west, and encompasses the major thriving hubs of Dubbo and Wellington.

The Dubbo Regional Council LGA benefits from significant investment opportunities and sustainable economic growth, servicing a catchment area equivalent to one third of the size of New South Wales.

The Dubbo Regional Council LGA is home to 56,720 people (2023 estimate), which represents an average annual increase of 1.3% over the last 10 years. This population will continue to grow, with an additional 10,000 people projected to call the Dubbo Regional Council LGA home by 2036.

Dubbo Regional Council is transitioning towards becoming a vibrant, culturally diverse destination hub. Almost 20% of the population was born overseas, with just under 20% speaking a language other than English at home.

The Dubbo Regional Council LGA is a thriving location which will continue to expand over time.

Major projects will continue to generate economic growth within the region.

Home to approximately 5,100 successful businesses the Dubbo Regional Council LGA has proved to be a fantastic destination to invest in. The region also provides the opportunity for an affordable lifestyle to become an attainable reality with a median monthly mortgage repayments at around \$1,500 and median rents averaging at \$300. There is something for everyone with notably over 100 sporting clubs, 3 shopping malls and 57 educational facilities.

*References – REMPLAN, ABS (2021 Quickstats)*

# Community Snapshot

If our community population totalled **100** people



**49** are men (49.4%)

**51** are women (50.6%)



**19** are born overseas (18.5%)



**17** are over 65+ years (17.3%)



**1** person speaks Nepali (1.4%)



**18** speak another language other than English at home (17.7%).



**17** are between the ages of 12 - 25 (17%)



**17** are Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander (16.6%)



**3** are employed in a hospital (2.5%)



**40.2%** of households comprise of couples with children



**6** have a need for assistance with core activities (6%)



**1** person speaks Punjabi (0.7%) at home



**72** have both parents born in Australia (71.9%)



**14** are attending Tertiary Education (14.1%)



**61** are in the labour force (60.7%)



**30** work full-time (29.8%)



**25** are Catholic (25.3%)



**Average Age**

**36**



**Total Population**

**56,720** (2023 Estimate)



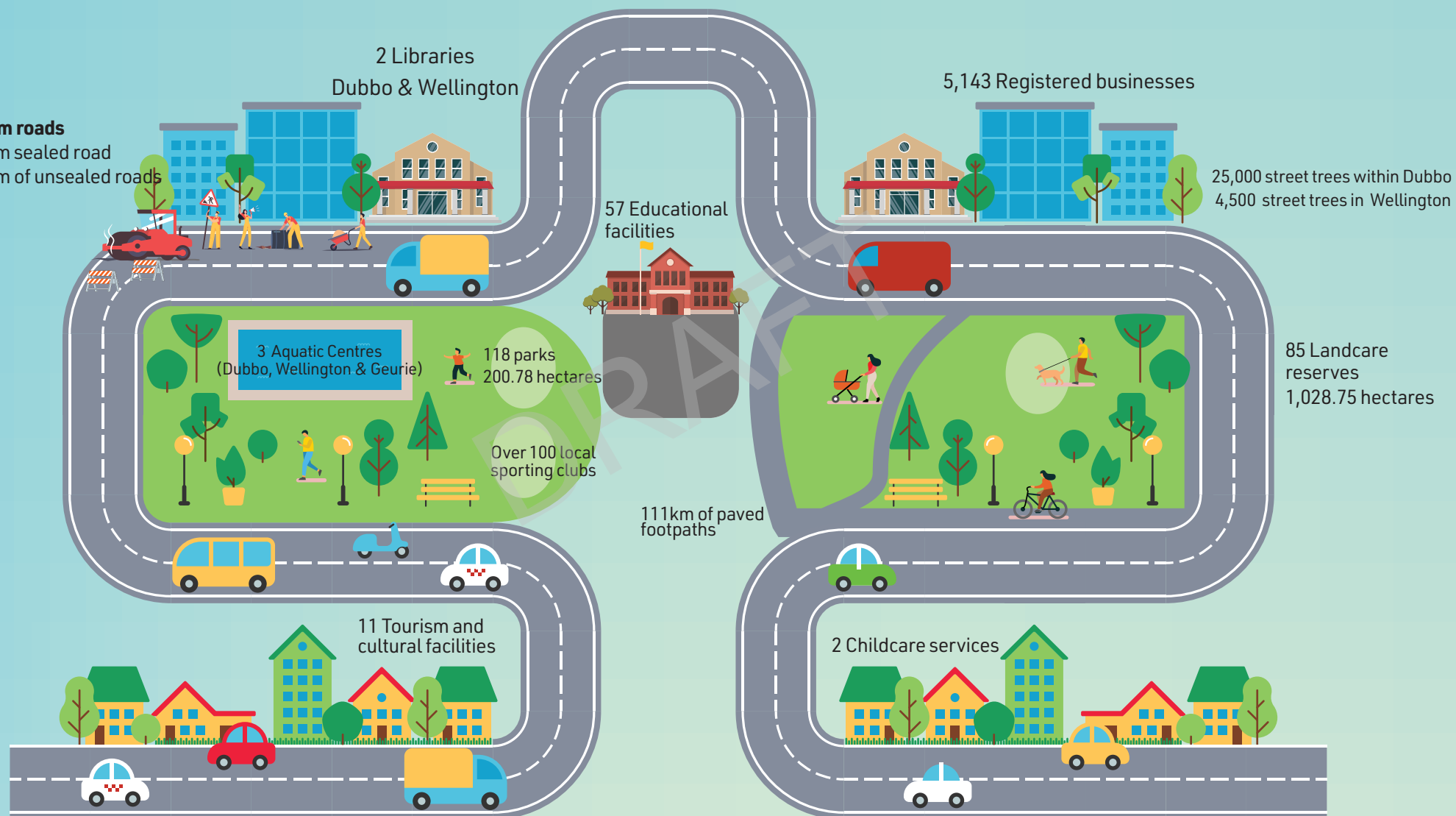
**Total Households**

**22,639**

References - REMPLAN, ABS (2021 Quickstats)



# Our Region



# What is Community Engagement?



Community engagement is the process of involving people in the decisions that affect their lives and environment. It is proactive and ongoing, promoting open discussion and shared responsibilities for decisions.

Council recognises that people have a right to be informed and to have a say on projects that are important to them or may impact their daily lives. Community engagement gives Council a better understanding of community views and values and helps us make more informed decisions and deliver better services.

# Engagement Principles

Dubbo Regional Council have adopted the following principles which represent the foundational elements and underlying aspiration for community engagement.



## **BUILD RELATIONSHIPS**

Act in an honest, open and respectful way to build strong relationships, partnerships and trust with our stakeholders.



## **RIGHT TO BE INVOLVED**

Believe stakeholders have a right to be involved in decisions that affect them.



## **CLARITY OF PURPOSE**

Well planned with a defined purpose and stages for community input.



## **ACCESSIBLE AND INCLUSIVE**

Seek views representative of the community ensuring the most comprehensive range of stakeholders are able to participate. A broad range of activities are to be considered for this to occur.



## **TIMELY AND COORDINATED**

Engage early and provide enough time for our stakeholders to provide input so that view can be considered.



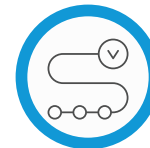
## **TAILORED**

Use a range of communication and engagement methods that suit the purpose and type of project we are consulting on. Consider the impact, complexity, risk, and timing and range of stakeholders involved.



## **TRANSPARENT**

Provide information in a manner that enables community to provide input. Make decisions in an open and transparent way and provide feedback to our community to explain decision making processes and decision outcomes.



## **CONTINUOUS LEARNING**

Evaluate our engagement activities and learn from feedback and best practice.



# Why Community Participation is Important

Participating in community engagement contributes to improving the quality of life for those living in the Dubbo Regional Local Government Area and has a direct impact on Council planning, facilities management and service delivery. It can be a rewarding and beneficial experience.

By getting involved in a decision-making process you can:

- ✓ Be a leading voice for the community
- ✓ Share ideas, aspirations, concerns, needs and experiences
- ✓ Make connections and hear what others think
- ✓ Provide input on priorities and resource allocation
- ✓ Find out more information about projects or plans directly from the project team
- ✓ Learn about the matters Council must consider before making the decision
- ✓ Gain a better understanding of how the outcome of the decision will benefit the wider community

# What Makes the Dubbo Region Special to You?

## What Do you Want to Fund?

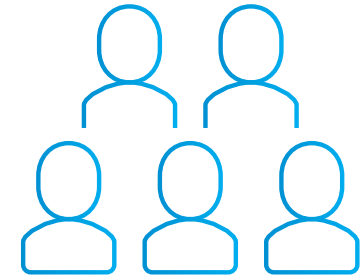


## When we will seek community participation

When we engage with the community varies depending on the complexity and nature of the activity, as well as the level of impact on the community.

Times we may engage with the community include:

- ✓ Change of service or strategic direction is proposed
- ✓ New project, plan or initiative being developed
- ✓ Significant policy, strategy or plan being developed or changed
- ✓ Major infrastructure projects being considered or planned
- ✓ Issues raised that require a decision
- ✓ Decisions being made that will impact our community



## When we won't seek community participation

There are some circumstances when we will not engage with the community to seek input. For example:

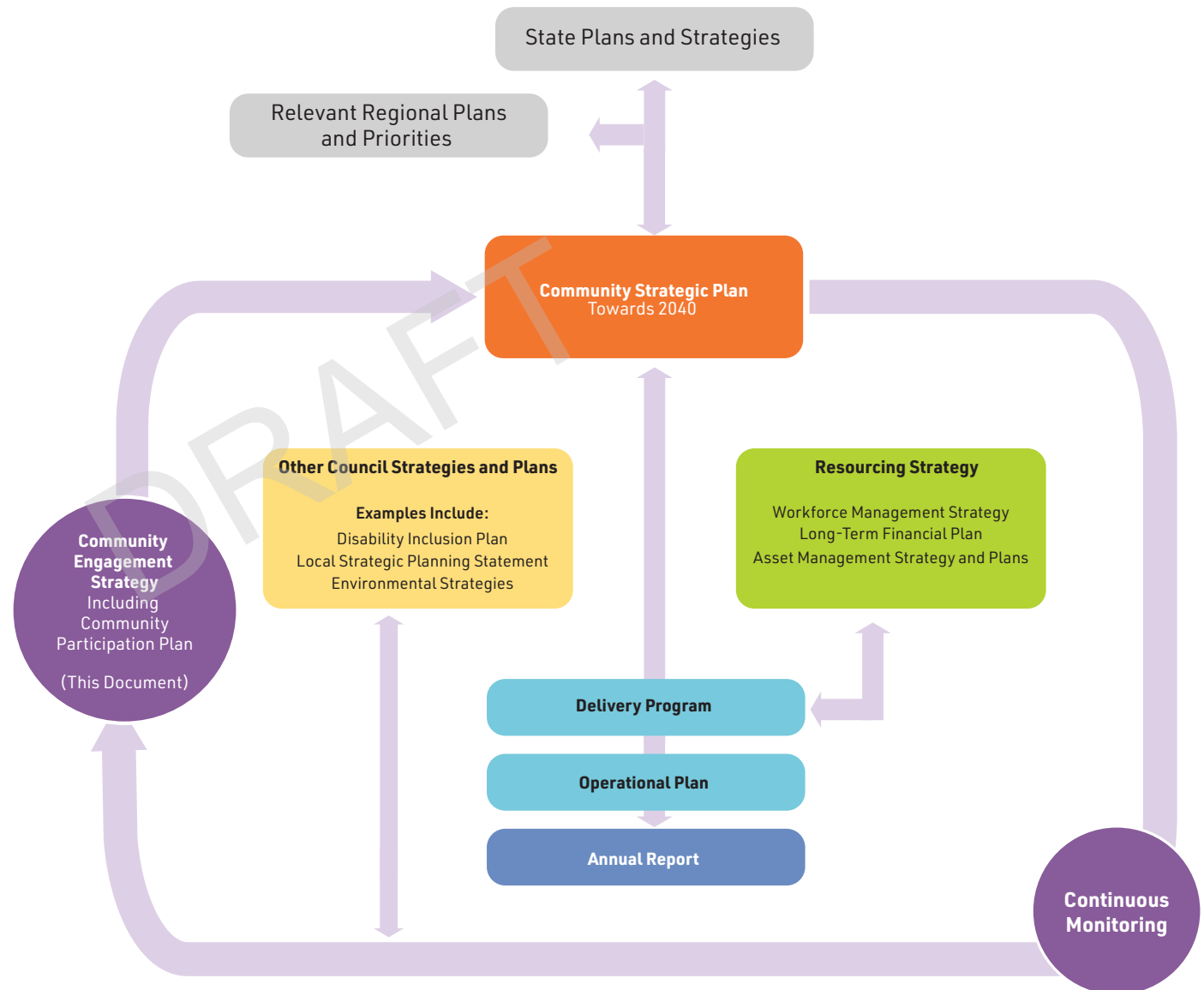
- ✗ No scope for community influence
- ✗ Public health and safety are at risk
- ✗ Immediate resolution is required or we are responding to an emergency
- ✗ Matter is strictly confidential or commercially sensitive
- ✗ Developing or reviewing internal procedures and protocols
- ✗ Legal constraints









# The Integrated Planning and Reporting Framework

The role of the community is at the heart of the Integrated Planning and Performance Framework (IP&R). Our engagement is linked to plans, strategies and work outlined in our framework and shows how often we engage around those plans and strategies. Ongoing community engagement and the feedback people provide establishes the overarching 10 plus year strategic direction of Council through the Community Strategic Plan and develops the four-year Delivery Program which ultimately influences our day-to-day activities and service provisions through the annual Operational Plan.



# Roles and Responsibilities

<b>The Mayor</b> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Act as the spokesperson for the Council to promote engagement on key strategic plans including developing the Community Strategic Plan.</li> <li>✓ Together with the Chief Executive Officer, ensure adequate opportunities and mechanisms for engagement between Council and the local community.</li> <li>✓ Promote partnerships between Council and key stakeholders.</li> </ul>	<b>Chief Executive Officer</b> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Oversee preparation of the Community Strategic Plan and Integrated Planning and Reporting documents along with endorsement by the elected Council.</li> <li>✓ Ensure that community members are given enough information to participate in the Integrated Planning and Reporting process in a meaningful way.</li> <li>✓ Sustain an organisational culture that values community participation and capability, seeking effective community input.</li> <li>✓ Ensure appropriate performance monitoring of engagement systems, processes and practices.</li> </ul>
<b>Mayor and Councillors</b> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Promote engagement on key strategic plans including supporting and participating in community engagement for the development of the Community Strategic Plan.</li> <li>✓ Participate in the development of Integrated Planning and Reporting documents, including the Community Strategy Plan.</li> <li>✓ Endorse and monitor the Community Strategic Plan on behalf of the community and approve the remaining components of the Integrated Planning and Reporting documents.</li> <li>✓ Promote and participate in community engagement activities.</li> </ul>	<b>Council Staff</b> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Work with and support the Chief Executive Officer in the development and ongoing monitoring of the Community Engagement Strategy and plans.</li> <li>✓ Implement the Community Engagement Strategy and provide timely and ongoing advice to the Chief Executive Officer on community views.</li> <li>✓ Build capability to support effective community engagement practices across the organisation.</li> </ul>

# Responsible Behaviour

An effective participation framework should enable community to actively, constructively and respectfully have their voice heard and equally hear the voice of others. Community members may be asked to leave forums, meetings and online engagement spaces if unreasonable behaviour is displayed.



Be brief and once you have voiced your feedback, let others have an opportunity.

Do your best to understand the pros and cons of every option. Be objective and fair-minded.

Listen to and respect other points of view. Comment on the feedback and not the person.

Everyone is encouraged to participate but it is OK to just listen and observe.

Pay attention to the person speaking. If you think you will forget an idea that comes to mind, write it down.

Be solution focused; if identifying an issue or opportunity, present ideas on potential solutions and/or proposed next steps.



Insisting on an unreasonable amount of information, scale of services, or making an unreasonable number of approaches.

Rudeness, anger, aggression, harassment, threats or physical violence.

Behaviour that is obstructive or deliberately unhelpful.

Making allegations with no evidence.

Personal attacks on individuals including Councillors, Staff or other community members.

Continue to proceed with issues even though they have been dealt with.

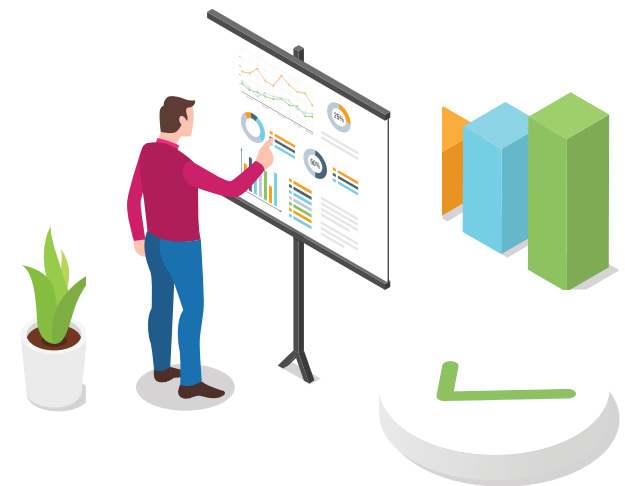


# Our Engagement Approach

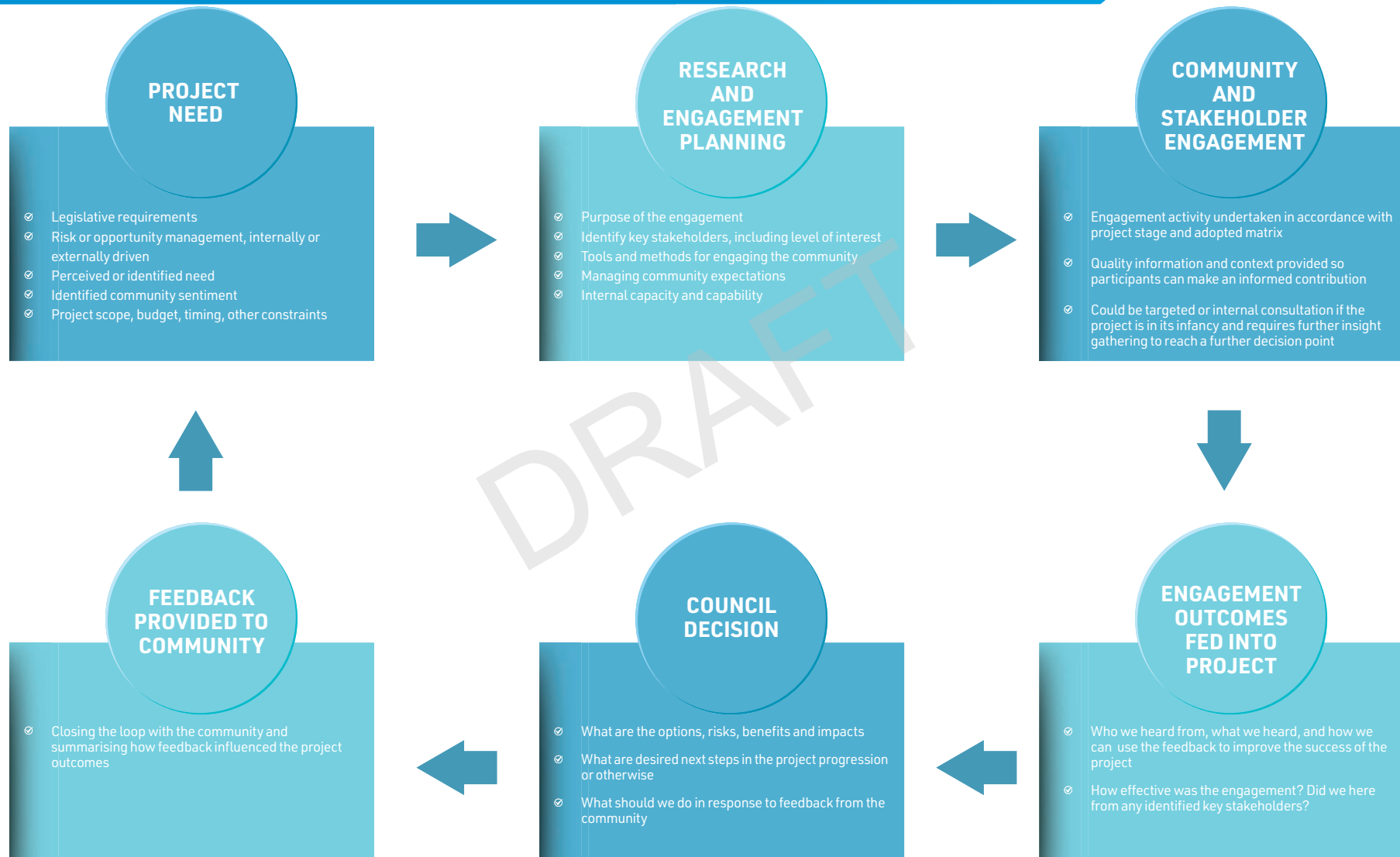
An overview of what we will consider during each stage of the engagement process, from planning engagement activities through to delivery, reviewing the effectiveness of our engagement and sharing information about how input from the community was used to inform our decision-making.

A project could be any particular body of work, for example a master plan, a policy, a new building, a new service to community or proposed change in service to community.

The ongoing connection represents closing the loop in the process and also identifies a particular project may have multiple stages where it undertakes the engagement process a number of times to reach various decision points. For example, a project will likely have a level of stakeholder engagement to inform a report to Council, for then the elected body to make a decision if the project is to proceed for further consultation and/or a formal public exhibition period.



# Our Engagement Approach



**Note:** Projects outside clear alignment to adopted Delivery Program or Operational Plan, or require resource allocation, must go to Council for direction prior to undertaking further community engagement. In this circumstance, strategic direction will be sought by Council before broader or targeted community consultation.

# How We Engage



## Engaging in person

Engagement or participation is not only about having your say, it is also about listening to others to understand their point of view. In person engagement activities allow an opportunity for discussion.

- ✓ Exhibition documentation displayed in Council's Customer Experience Centres in Dubbo and Wellington.
- ✓ Community workshops, stakeholder meetings, information sessions and public events enable the community to understand and be understood by others when sharing their views.
- ✓ Community committee and ceference groups provide a forum for community group representatives to raise issues relevant to the Committee's Terms of Reference.
- ✓ Direct contact, either in person or over the phone, with individual community members and groups on specific projects and plans.
- ✓ Members of the public are able to address the Mayor and Councillors at Committee meetings or during Public Forum at Ordinary Council meetings. Meetings are live streamed and the recording catalogued online. Presenting at a meeting is a great opportunity to speak directly to the elected body but there is no opportunity for two way engagement during the meeting.



## Engaging online

Online communication and engagement continues to grow and can allow people who may otherwise be excluded from in person engagement activities to have their say.

- ✓ Council's online engagement platform Your Say – [yoursay.dubbo.nsw.gov.au](https://yoursay.dubbo.nsw.gov.au) provides the community a central hub to engage, participate and provide feedback on a range of Council's projects, plans, policies and studies including public exhibitions.
- ✓ Council's website provides information to the public on Council activities, services and projects including progress reports on the adopted Towards 2040 Delivery Program and Operational Plan.
- ✓ Social media keeps the community up to date on Council news and provides the community access opportunities to learn more and have their say on Council matters.
- ✓ All Council meetings are live streamed via YouTube, providing greater access to Council decisions and debate and eliminates geographic barriers preventing the community from attending meetings.
- ✓ Your Say Community Engagement E-newsletter provides a quarterly update on Council's engagement activities including information about engagement projects open for feedback, how you can participate and outcomes of completed engagement activities.



## Engaging through traditional methods

There is still a need and appetite for traditional methods of engagement. Some traditional methods are outlined under engaging in person.

- ✓ Print publications distributed to our stakeholder groups and specific industry and special interest publications.
- ✓ Direct mail to residents and groups, including rates notices and courtesy notices of major projects.
- ✓ Onsite or physical displays and signage at events or key locations.

# Our Stakeholders

A stakeholder is any individual, group of individuals, organisation or entity with a specific stake in the outcome of a decision made by Council. Our stakeholders can vary significantly from project to project.

Community engagement is a shared responsibility. We all have a role to play in participatory decision-making that shapes the places where we live, work, play and create. There are roles for both Council and the community in initiating, leading, participating in and delivering engagement activities.

A vital component of the community engagement process includes identifying and understanding key stakeholders who will be impacted by or who have an interest in a decision. Our engagement aims to reach the community to ensure a range of views are heard.



Below is a list of the stakeholder groups who may have an interest in or be impacted by our decisions and projects;

## External Groups

- ✓ **Residents**
- ✓ **Travellers to the region for work purposes**
- ✓ **Business industry groups**
- ✓ **Dubbo Chamber of Commerce**
- ✓ **Organisations with a Council delegate**
- ✓ **Community organisations / groups**
- ✓ **Sporting organisations**
- ✓ **State and Federal agencies**
- ✓ **Members of Parliament**
- ✓ **Schools and education providers**
- ✓ **Visitors**
- ✓ **Tourism industry groups**
- ✓ **Social groups including:**
  - Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders
  - People living with disabilities
  - Migrants and new Australian Citizens
  - Youth
  - Seniors

## Internal Groups

- ✓ **Mayor and Councillors**
- ✓ **Council staff**
- ✓ **Standing Committees**
  - Corporate Services Committee
  - Infrastructure, Planning and Environmental Committee
  - Culture and Community Committee
- ✓ **Topical or specialised committees**
- ✓ **Working parties**
- ✓ **Project control groups**
- ✓ **Advisory groups**



# Inclusive and Accessible Engagement

We want to hear from all members of our community to make sure that what we deliver for our community is informed, relevant and responsive to community needs. We recognise that some groups are less likely to participate and may face additional barriers or challenges in engaging with us.

These groups include;



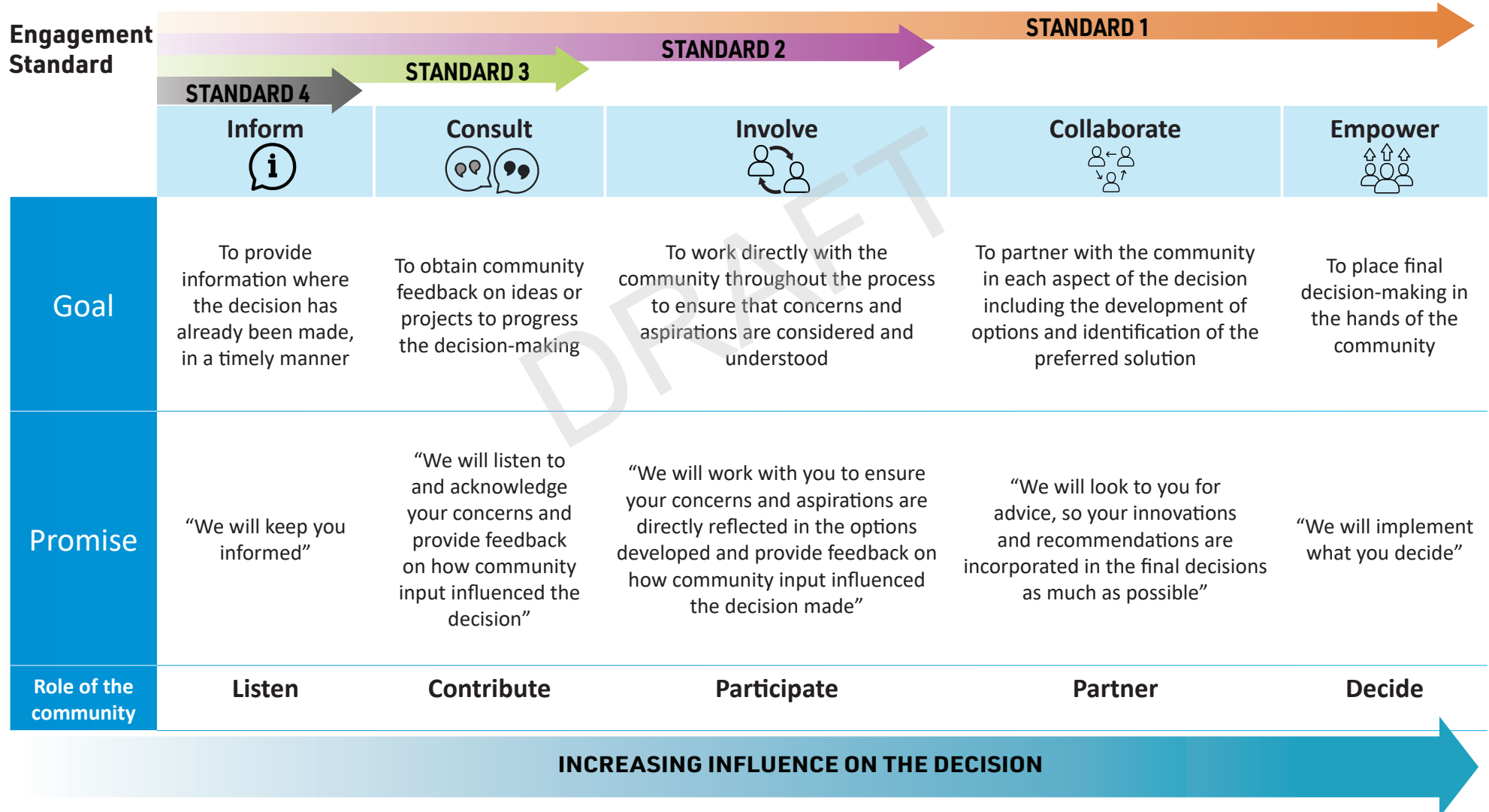
We know from early engagement for this strategy that we need to make inclusion of diverse groups a key priority.

Some of the ways that we will do this are:

- ✓ Identify hard-to-reach groups during engagement planning
- ✓ Using a range of engagement methods and tools that cater to the needs of hard-to-reach groups, including DRC's Advisory Committees
- ✓ Continuing to engage with DRC's Reconciliation Action Plan Working Group to provide advice on strategic matters of importance to local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities
- ✓ Providing our engagement materials in accessible formats
- ✓ Translating our engagement materials when required
- ✓ Hosting our engagement events in accessible venues and locations
- ✓ Providing more in person opportunities, where possible

# Levels of Community Participation

The International Association for Public Participation Spectrum (IAP2) Spectrum has five levels of engagement that correspond to the community's increasing level of influence on decision-making. The IAP2 Spectrum helps to determine the appropriate scope of input from the community and the role that the community will have in the decision-making process.



# Engagement Standard Matrix

## HIGH

- ✓ potential for high risk of controversy or conflict with Dubbo Regional Council's values
- ✓ significant impacts to attributes, such as natural environment, water supply
- ✓ land use or heritage
- ✓ potential large impact on government strategies and directions

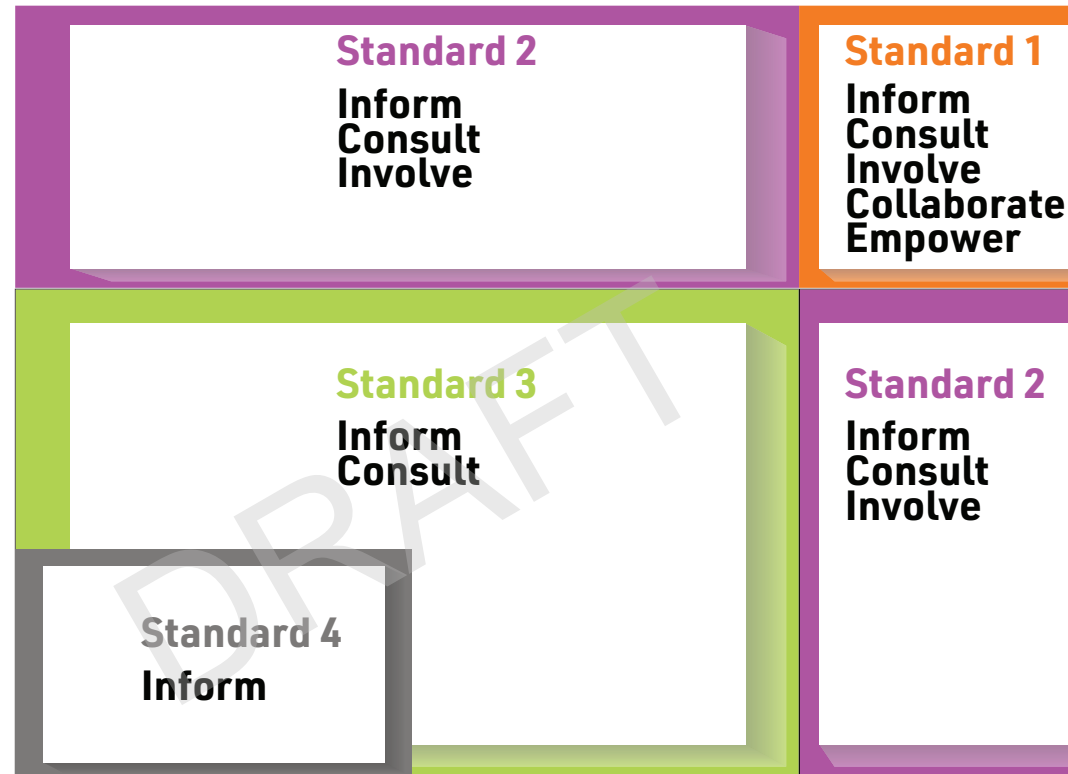
## MODERATE

- ✓ potential for some risk of controversy or conflict
- ✓ loss or change to any facility or service to the locality
- ✓ potential moderate impact on government strategies and directions

## LOW

- ✓ low or no risk of controversy or conflict
- ✓ small change to any facility or service to the locality
- ✓ low impact on government strategies and directions

Community Impact



Community Scale

## LOW

- ✓ small component of the population
- ✓ relevant to a street, suburb, village or small specific group or users of a facility or service
- ✓ low complexity including only several stakeholders and community groups

## MODERATE

- ✓ significant proportion of the population
- ✓ relevant to a locality, town or village or a large specific group or user of a facility or service
- ✓ moderate complexity including multiple stakeholders and community

## HIGH

- ✓ greater majority or entire population
- ✓ relevant to a large geographical area
- ✓ high complexity including numerous stakeholders and community groups

# Engagement Methods and Resourcing

Our engagement methods are outlined according to the level of community participation being sought, which can be determined by using the engagement standard matrix.

The following tables provide guidance on a range of engagement channels in accordance with the standard (1, 2, 3, 4). Methods from a lower level may also be utilised to support a higher level. For example use of email campaign to general participation in a collaborative workshop.



## Key

TYPE	 in person	 online	 traditional	
TIME	 0-5 hours	 5-25 hours	 over 25 hours minimum per task including preparation and staff time	
COST	 no cost	 <\$1,000	 \$1,001 - \$10,000	 >\$10,000 minimum costs not including staff time
ACTION	 required	 recommended	 optional	 not required
























INFORM					Suggested Action per Standard			
Engagement Method	In practice	Type	Time	Cost	1	2	3	4
Customer Experience	Information provided to Customer Experience Officers to respond to customer enquires.							
Dubbo Regional Council Website	Information is published on Council's website example project updates, latest news, water outages and scheduled maintenance.							
Media Release	Issued to news outlets.							
Social Media	Social media channels (Facebook, Instagram, LinkedIn, YouTube, TikTok & Twitter).							
Print and digital advertising	Digital marketing, newspapers, industry publications, radio, community service announcements.							
E-newsletters	Council's project based or general e-newsletters. Subscribe at <a href="https://yoursay.dubbo.nsw.gov.au/register">yoursay.dubbo.nsw.gov.au/register</a> .							
Presentations	Present to internal stakeholder groups. Include exit survey of engagement process at completion of event.							
Direct Mail	Addressed correspondence to a specific location, person or organisation.							
Letterbox Drop	Unaddressed bulk drop (letter, flyer and/or notification) to people with a letterbox in a determined area.							
Pop-up promotion stands	Circulate information or posters to frequently visited locations such as libraries and Visitor Information Centres.							
Information in rates notice mail out	Provide information in annual or quarterly rate notices.							


















## Key

TYPE	 in person	 online	 traditional	
TIME	 0-5 hours	 5-25 hours	 over 25 hours minimum per task including preparation and staff time	
COST	 no cost	 <\$1,000	 \$1,001 - \$10,000	 >\$10,000 minimum costs not including staff time
ACTION	 required	 recommended	 optional	 not required

CONSULT					Suggested Action per Standard			
Engagement Method	In practice	Type	Time	Cost	1	2	3	4
Your Say – Online Engagement Platform	Seek feedback using consultation tools such as mapping, voting tools, polls, surveys and discussion forums on <a href="https://yoursay.dubbo.nsw.gov.au">yoursay.dubbo.nsw.gov.au</a>							
Meetings by invitation	Invite stakeholders to meet with staff and/or Councillors to discuss and exchange views. Include onsite/location based meetings, include exit survey of engagement at completion of event.							
Reference Groups	Invite people with an active interest in a decision or problem to be part of a meeting where detailed and robust conversation occurs to inform decision making, generally held in small groups of no more than 20 people, include exit survey of engagement process at completion of event.	 						
Externally facilitated 'design charrette' / high participatory workshop	Intensive, hands-on workshop bringing people from different disciplines and backgrounds together to with members of the community to explore design options for a particular area. Include exit survey of engagement process at completion of event.							
Community Survey	Council undertakes a community survey every two years to understand community priorities and overall level of satisfaction with Council's performance. These in-depth community survey's aim to randomly survey a proportion of the Local Government Area and are conducted via telephone and online.	 						

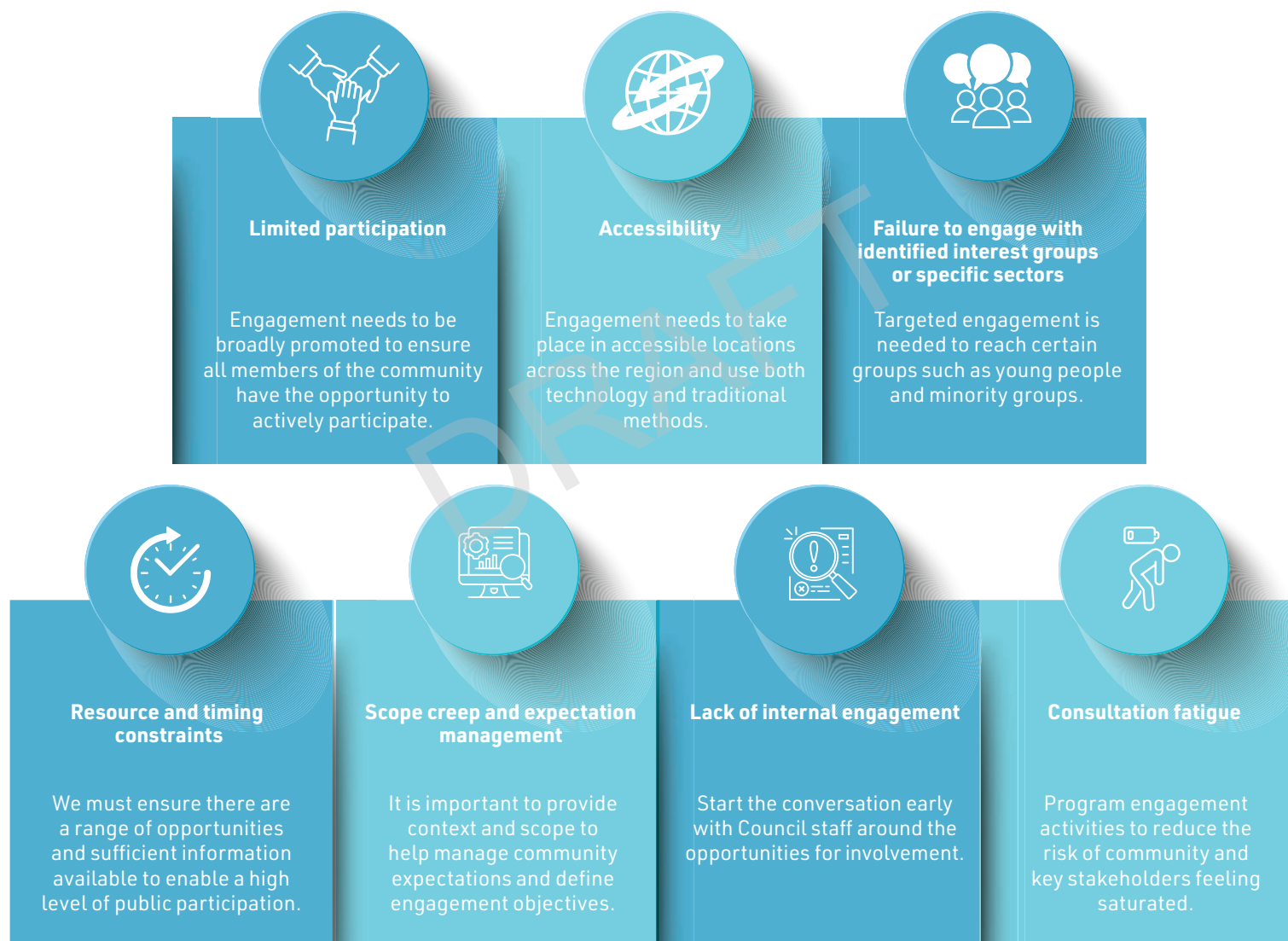
<b>INVOLVE</b> 	<b>Key</b>	<b>TYPE</b>	 in person	 online	 traditional	<b>Suggested Action per Standard</b>						
		<b>TIME</b>	 0-5 hours	 5-25 hours	 over 25 hours minimum per task including preparation and staff time							
<b>COLLABORATE</b> 		<b>COST</b>	 no cost	 <\$1,000	 \$1,001 - \$10,000	 >\$10,000 minimum costs not including staff time						
		<b>ACTION</b>	 required	 recommended	 optional	 not required						
<b>Engagement Method</b>	<b>In practice</b>					<b>Type</b>	<b>Time</b>	<b>Cost</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>
Standing and other Community Committees	Seek feedback using consultation tools such as mapping, voting tools, polls, surveys and discussion forums on <a href="https://yoursay.dubbo.nsw.gov.au">yoursay.dubbo.nsw.gov.au</a>											

EMPOWER 					Suggested Action per Standard			
Engagement Method	In practice	Type	Time	Cost	1	2	3	4
Community survey on a specific topic	Engage a vendor to survey a random sample of a specific topic.							
Polls and referendums	Council may seek community views on any issue through a non-compulsory poll of electors’ options or it may hold a ‘constitutional referendum’ on certain electoral matters, in which voting is compulsory and the result is binding.							

**Disclaimer:** The above lists are Council's identified and preferred methods of community engagement and participation. Council is not limited to this list. Depending on project needs and industry trends alternative methods may be used as required in order to reach a range of people, interest, ages and communities.

# Challenges to Engagement (Risk and Opportunities)

Council will need to overcome the following risks and challenges when undertaking engagement activities:



# Implementation – What We Engage On

The following table explains how we will engage with our community about plans and strategies, as well as other work we do, so our community knows what to expect from us. Planning-related projects have specific exhibition timeframes that must be met, which are outlined in the following pages.

PROJECT	Level of Engagement	How?	What?	Exhibition period (minimum requirement)
<b>Council's key long-term plans</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Community Strategic Plan</li> <li>✓ Delivery Program</li> <li>✓ Resourcing Strategy</li> <li>✓ Community Engagement Strategy, including Community Participation Plan.</li> <li>✓ Local Strategic Planning Statement</li> <li>✓ Strategies</li> <li>✓ Master/Precint plans</li> </ul>	Involve	<p>Involve the community to ensure priorities are reflected in the decision.</p> <p>Provide a range of opportunities/channels for the community to share their views. Prior to public exhibition there may be multiple methods of engagement undertaken to develop a draft plan.</p> <p>Council's Website.</p> <p>Written notification it directly impacted.</p>	Directly reflect community concerns and aspirations in the finalised plan.	28 days
<b>Council's annual Operational Plan, Budget and fees and charges</b>	Consult	<p>Involve the community to ensure priorities are reflected in the decision.</p> <p>Provide a range of opportunities/channels for the community to share their views.</p> <p>Council's Website.</p>	Directly reflect community concerns and aspirations in the finalised plans.	28 days

PROJECT	Level of Engagement	How?	What?	Exhibition period (minimum requirement)
<b>Key Council policies</b> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Code of Meeting Practice <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Payment of Expenses and Provisions of Facilities to Councillors Policy <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Others as required	Consult	Council's website	Acknowledge concerns and provide feedback on how public input influenced the decision.	28 days or 42 days as specified by legislative requirements or Council resolution.
<b>New capital works (for example, consultation to prepare draft master plans prior to exhibition)</b>	Involve	Involve the community to ensure priorities are reflected in the decision.  Provide a range of opportunities/channels for the community to share their views	Directly reflect community concerns and aspirations in the finalised plan.	Minimum 21 days
<b>Planning proposal for the Dubbo Regional Local Environmental Plan 2022, subject to a Gateway Determination</b>  <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Planning proposals explain the intended effect of and justification for a proposed amendment the Dubbo Regional Local Environmental Plan 2022.	Consult	Council's website.  NSW Planning Portal.  Written notification/letter.  If the planning proposal is site-specific (for example, area plans which only apply to certain sites within the region) we notify landowners and adjoining landowners. Minor amendments or general amendments that do not affect a specific site may not be notified by letter.	Acknowledge concerns and provide feedback on how public input influenced the decision.	28 days or as specified by the Gateway Determination.



PROJECT	Level of	How?	What?	Exhibition period (minimum requirement)
<p><b>Re-classification of land</b></p> <p>Land in Council ownership must be classified for either community or operational use under the Local Government Act 1993. Community land is for land designated for community use such as community halls, libraries and recreational facilities. Operational land serves a commercial or operational function such as officers, work depots or land being retained for strategic reasons.</p> <p>When land comes into community ownership, for example, new sportsgrounds, they need to be classified correctly. In addition, Council sometimes reclassifies land it no longer requires for community use to allow leasing or sale of land.</p> <p>For example, reclassification of community land to operational land at various sites across the region.</p>	Consult	<p>Council's website.</p> <p>Written notification/letter.</p>	<p>Acknowledge concerns and provide feedback on how public input influenced the decision.</p>	<p>28 days or as specified by the Gateway Determination and a public hearing scheduled for at least 21 days after the public exhibition occurs.</p>
<p><b>Local Approvals Policy</b></p> <p>The Local Approvals Policy identifies low-impact activities that can be undertaken without approval from Council such as community events, footway fining and mobile vending, provided they meet certain criteria.</p>	Consult	<p>Council's website.</p>	<p>Acknowledge concerns and provide feedback on how public input influenced the decision.</p>	<p>42 days</p>

PROJECT	Level of Engagement	How?	What?	Exhibition period (minimum requirement)
<b>Development Control Plans</b> A Development Control Plan provides detailed planning and design guidance to support the aims, objectives and planning controls in the Dubbo Regional Local Environmental Plan 2022.	Consult	Council's website.  If the Development Control Plan amendment is site-specific (for example, area plans which only apply to certain sites within the region) we notify landowners and adjoining landowners. Minor amendments or general amendments that do not affect a specific site may not be notified by letter.	Acknowledge concerns and provide feedback on how public input influenced the decision.	28 days
<b>Local Strategic Planning Statement</b> The Local Strategic Planning Statement identifies Council's vision for land use planning in the Local Government Area. It identifies the overarching strategic direction, how change will be managed in the future, and actions required to achieve the land use vision.	Involve	Council's website. Written notification.	Directly reflect community concerns and aspirations in the finalised plan.	28 days
<b>Development Contribution Plans</b> Development contribution plans set out the framework and requirements to help fund, plan and deliver infrastructure and services to meet the needs of current and future residents.	Consult	Council's website. Written notification.	Acknowledge concerns and provide feedback on how public input influenced the decision.	28 days

PROJECT	Level of	How?	What?	Exhibition period (minimum requirement)
<b>Planning Agreements</b> A Planning Agreement is an agreement entered into between Council and a developer where the developer agrees to fund public amenities or infrastructure, dedicate land at no cost to Council, or provide monetary contributions or any other material public benefit, for a public purpose.	Consult	Council's website.  Planning agreements must be exhibited alongside the associated development application or planning proposal.  If it is not practicable for notice to be given at the same time as the development application or planning proposal, it must be given as soon as practicable.	Acknowledge concerns and provide feedback on how public input influenced the decision.	28 days
<b>Development Applications</b> Application for development consent (other than for complying development certificate, for designated development or for State Significant Development)	Consult	Written notification/ letter.  Council's Application Tracker.	Acknowledge concerns and provide information on how public input was considered in the assessment.	14 days*  *Council may extend the public exhibition period without further notification to those already notified.  * Development applications considered to have negligible impacts are not required to be notified.
<b>Integrated Development Applications</b>	Consult	Written notification/ letter.  Council's Application Tracker.	Acknowledge concerns and provide information on how public input was considered in the assessment	14-28 days

PROJECT	Level of Engagement	How?	What?	Exhibition period (minimum requirement)
<b>Designated Development Applications</b>	Consult	Written notification/letter. Council's Application Tracker.	Acknowledge concerns and provide information on how public input was considered in the assessment.	28 days
<b>Council related Development Applications</b>  Council-related development application means a development application, for which a council is the consent authority, that is— (a) made by or on behalf of the council, or (b) for development on land, other than a public road within the meaning of the Local Government Act 1993— (i) of which the council is an owner, a lessee or a licensee, or (ii) otherwise vested in or under the control of the council.	Consult	Written notification / letter. Council's Application Tracker.	Acknowledge concerns and provide feedback on how public input was considered in the assessment.	28 days

PROJECT	Level of Engagement	How?	What?	Exhibition period (minimum requirement)
<b>Development application (DA) – application for development consent for State Significant Development.</b>  Some types of development are deemed to have State significance due to the size, economic value or potential impacts that a development may have. State Significant Development (SSD) is identified in the State Environmental Planning Policy (State and Regional Development) and includes development such as new education establishments, hospitals and correction centres, mining and extraction operations and tourist facilities. A proposal is identified for SSD if it is over a certain size, within a sensitive environmental area, or exceeds a capital investment.	As required by the NSW Department of Planning and Environment.	These are managed by the NSW Department of Planning and Environment and will be viewable on the department's website.	As required by the NSW Department of Planning and Environment.	As required by the NSW Department of Planning and Environment.
<b>Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) – obtained under Division 5.1</b>  EIS's prepared for development under Part 5 of the EP A Act for certain development such as State Significant Development.	As required by the NSW Department of Planning and Environment.	Published to the NSW Department of Planning and Environment Planning Portal. Council's website.	As required by the NSW Department of Planning and Environment.	As required by the NSW Department of Planning and Environment.
<b>Modified Development Applications</b>	No requirement. Notification for all Modified Applications being Section 4.55 (1) (1A) and (2) will be at the discretion of the Manager Building and Development Services.	Council's application Tracker.	No requirement.	No requirement.

**Disclaimer: For any inconsistencies, refer to the EP & A Act 1979 and regulations 2021.**

**Note:**  For complex applications Council may also notify and advertise in local print media.  
 Where alterations or additions are proposed in statutory planning functions, the level of notification will be at the discretion of the Manager Building and Development Services.



# Circumstances Where Notification is Not Required

Some minor development is of a scale and nature that does not require formal notification of adjoining properties. Provided the proposal complies with all applicable development controls (LEP, DCP & other relevant policies) and/or is considered unlikely to detrimentally impact adjoining properties, no formal notification period applies.

This applies to development such as:

- ✓ Residential dwellings
- ✓ Alterations and additions
- ✓ Residential sheds and garages
- ✓ Rural buildings
- ✓ Landscaping
- ✓ Fences
- ✓ Pools
- ✓ Change of use
- ✓ Strata subdivisions of existing developments
- ✓ Boundary adjustments where no additional lots are created



Where required by the plan, written notice of an application will be sent to adjoining owners of land subject of the application. This includes persons who own land that share a common property boundary with the site and land directly on the opposite side of a creek, road, pathway or similar thoroughfare.

As a minimum immediate adjoining properties are identified through Council's property system. Council at its discretion will further notify beyond, depending on the complexity of the application.

## Exempt and Complying Development

Some development, such as exempt and complying development under the State Environmental Planning Policy (Exempt and Complying Development Codes) 2008, does not allow opportunities for community engagement.

# Public Exhibition Notification and Timeframes

The process of public exhibition and notification is an important part of how DRC engages with our community on planning decisions. This provides a regular and valuable way for the community to participate in the decision making process by making comments on development proposals or draft plans during the public exhibition period.

Council's public exhibition processes are determined by the type and locality of the draft strategic plan or proposed development. This influences who Council notifies, where the information is available and the timeframe the documents will be publicly available.



The following section outlines the exhibition and notification processes for strategic and statutory planning documents.

### Statutory Planning

The assessment of Development Applications (DA's) lodged with Council, primarily under the provisions of the Environmental Planning and Assessment Act, 1979. (EP&A Act)

### Strategic Planning

Sets the desired outcomes and provides direction on how to achieve them. The strategic planning function enables development and assists in managing growth and change. Strategic Planning projects include:

- Community Participation Plans.
- Local Strategic Planning Statements.
- Planning Proposals.
- Development Control Plans.
- Developer Contributions Plans.
- Master Plans.
- Structure Plans.
- Policies relating to Development and Environment.
- Community Strategic Plan.

#### Disclaimer:

*Council may go beyond these timeframes and, at its discretion, may provide additional notification or longer timeframes to those property owners and occupiers, community groups, organisations and agencies that, in the opinion of Council, may have an interest in the strategy, plan or development proposal.*

# What is Public Exhibition?

Public exhibition means making documents, including draft plans, strategies, policies or development applications, available for the community to view and comment on through a formal submission. The public exhibition process typically involves notifying the community that documents are available to view publicly. Depending on the type of development application or plan, notification can be provided through Council's Your Say engagement platform, **[yoursay.dubbo.nsw.gov.au](https://yoursay.dubbo.nsw.gov.au)** and/or by mail (letter or email) to members of the community, adjoining landowners and residents or to relevant agencies and community groups.

## How are exhibition timeframes determined?



The Local Government Act (1993) also specifies minimum mandatory exhibition timeframes for some planning related matters such as Plans of Management (POMs). For proposals and plans not covered by these Acts, Council has its own standard minimum exhibition timeframes outlined in this strategy. The EP&A Act (1979) details the types of proposals and plans that must be considered. Schedule 1 of the EP&A Act (1979) sets the minimum statutory exhibition timeframes for these plans and proposals.

## What is a submission?



When comments on an engagement project, draft document or development application are provided to Council they are known as a formal submission. A submission outlines the support or concerns that an individual or group has relating to the engagement project. Submissions are encouraged to be made via the online engagement platform Your Say – **[yoursay.dubbo.nsw.gov.au](https://yoursay.dubbo.nsw.gov.au)** or in writing.

# Are Submissions Public Documents?

In accordance with the Government Information (Public Access) Act 2009, submissions to documents on public exhibition are public documents and may be viewed by the public and published on Council's website, listed on Council's DA Online tracker portal and/or included in Council meeting reports and agendas.

If you do not want your submission to be publicly available, a written request for confidentiality will be required.

Council may also determine a submission is not suitable for public viewing and publication. This could be because it contains personal, private or defamatory material. Further information about how Council manages submissions can be found in the "Privacy, Copyright, Disclaimer" section of Council's website, [dubbo.nsw.gov.au](http://dubbo.nsw.gov.au) or in the "Privacy Policy" on Council's Your Say Engagement Platform, [yoursay.dubbo.nsw.gov.au](http://yoursay.dubbo.nsw.gov.au).

## Personal Information

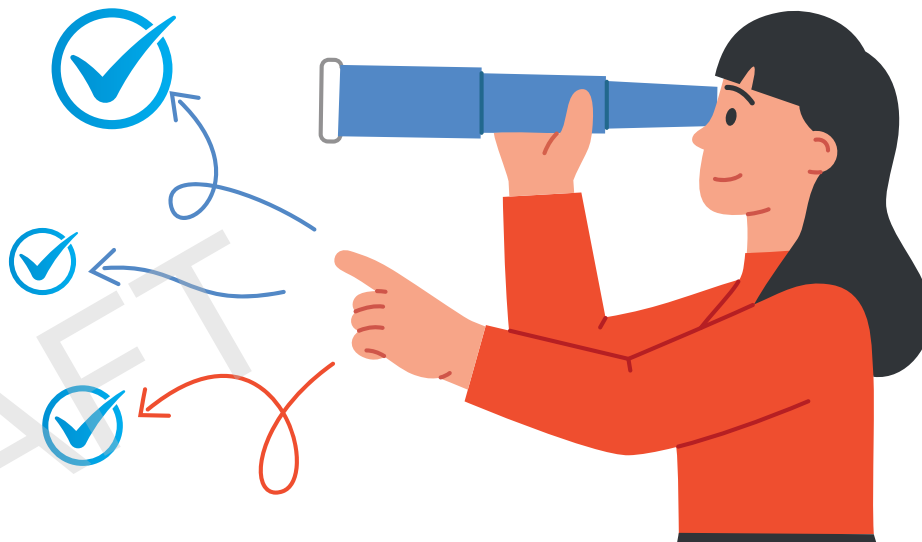
- ✓ Submission must include your name address and preferred contact method. Your Say or email correspondence for Development Applications are preferred.
- ✓ Persons have the right to remain anonymous if they so choose by refraining from submitting their personal information, however, the submission will be given less weight in the overall assessment and consideration.
- ✓ Please be aware that these details may be publicly available.
- ✓ All submissions are publicly available under the Government Information (Public Access) Act 2009 No 52.
- ✓ Effort is made to redact submissions where personal details are included; however, this may not always be possible.

## Disclosing political donations

The Local Government and Planning Legislation Amendment (Political Donations) Act 2008 imposes disclosure obligations on submitters in relation to political gifts and donations. Detailed information about your obligations under the Act can be found in the "Code of Conduct" section of Council's website, [dubbo.nsw.gov.au](http://dubbo.nsw.gov.au)

# Key Points to Note About Public Exhibitions

- ✓ Development Applications (DA'S) may be notified for longer than the minimum days if deemed necessary.
- ✓ Notification periods may be extended in consideration of the mailing process aiming to ensure that people notified receive the full notification period to consider the proposal.
- ✓ Timeframes are in calendar days and include weekends.
- ✓ If the exhibition period is due to close on a weekend or a public holiday, the exhibition may finish on the next business day.
- ✓ The period between 20 December and 10 January (inclusive) is excluded from the calculation of a period of public exhibition.
- ✓ Council is not required to make available for public inspection any part of an Environmental Impact Statement whose publication, in the opinion of Council, would be contrary to the public interest because of its confidential nature or for any other reason.





# Here Are Some Tips to Writing an Effective Submission

It can help to include the following information:



- ✓ Include the name of the Engagement Project, Draft Strategic Plan or the DA reference Number and the property address the DA relates to (this information is usually included in the notification material).
- ✓ Clearly state the reasons for objecting or supporting the Engagement Project, Draft Strategic Plan or Development Proposal and why. Give details about how you arrived at your assertions.
- ✓ Be brief and to the point or include a single page summary sheet where the submission is lengthy because of a number of issues covered.
- ✓ Be specific to the Project, DA, Strategic Plan or Strategy and avoid generalising.
- ✓ Be well researched and based on facts, not on hearsay. Talk to Council staff who are dealing with the application / project prior to writing your submission and make sure you understand what is proposed.
- ✓ Avoid statements which are defamatory or offensive.
- ✓ Suggest changes that might resolve the problems identified.
- ✓ Include your name and contact details as well as a daytime telephone number, as a Council staff member may need to clarify matters you raised in your submission.


# Should I Sign a Petition?


You may find that someone has started a petition to object to a Council proposal. Someone may also ask you to sign a pro forma letter. Council will consider petitions and letters received. However, an individual letter about how the proposal will affect you gives Council a much clearer picture of the likely impacts.

## Where should I send my submission?

Unless otherwise stated on the exhibition, a submission should be sent:

 **Online** - [yoursay.dubbo.nsw.gov.au](https://yoursay.dubbo.nsw.gov.au)

 **By Post** - PO BOX 81, Dubbo NSW 2830

 **In Person** - Customer Experience Centres  
Cnr Church and Darling Street, DUBBO  
Cnr Nanima Crescent and Warne Street, WELLINGTON

 **By email** - [council@dubbo.nsw.gov.au](mailto:council@dubbo.nsw.gov.au)

All submissions should be addressed to the Chief Executive Officer



Your submission must be received at Council's Customer Experience Centres by the date and time specified in the exhibition notification. If you are sending your submission through the mail, make sure you allow sufficient time for delivery on the closing date of submissions.

Objections relating to a DA or Strategic Planning document received after the exhibition period has concluded may not be taken into consideration by Council in the assessment of the DA or finalisation of the Draft Strategic Plan.

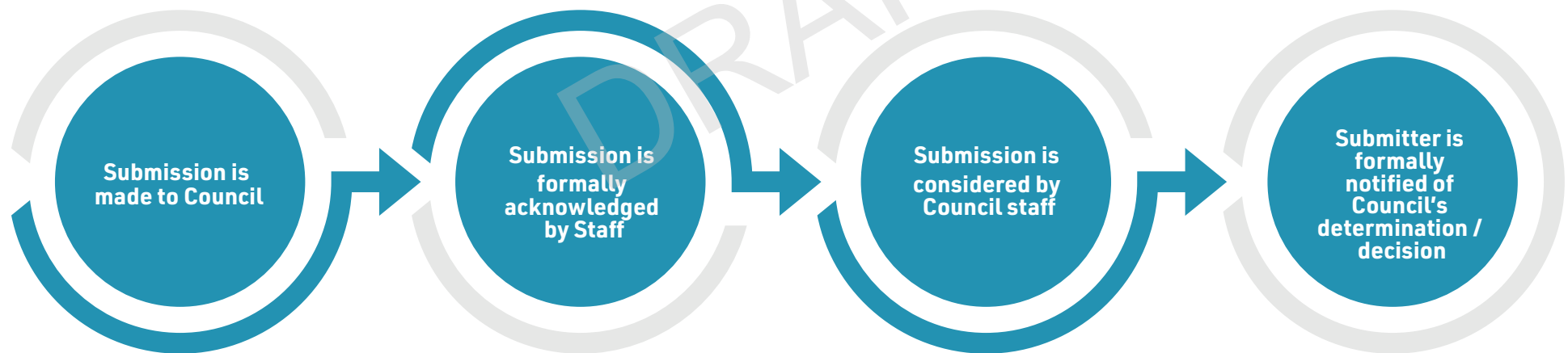
If for some reason you cannot meet the submission deadline, talk to the Council staff member handling the application/project before the closing date for submissions.

# What Happens to My Submission?

You will receive notification that your submission has been received. Your submission, along with others received, will then be considered as part of an assessment of the project, DA, preparation of a strategic plan or finalisation of a draft document.

You can continue to track the process of a DA via the Online DA Tracker [planning.dubbo.nsw.gov.au](http://planning.dubbo.nsw.gov.au)



You can also contact Council to find out the progress of a project or draft strategic plan after the exhibition period has closed or visit [yoursay.dubbo.nsw.gov.au](http://yoursay.dubbo.nsw.gov.au).



# How We Listen and Respond?

We want to ensure community feedback is considered when decisions are made.  
Once feedback has been considered, Council staff will recommend next steps or outcomes.

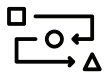
As part of the process to close the loop, we will:

-  Update the Your Say engagement project page outlining engagement outcomes and next steps.
-  Email those who provided feedback with the outcomes of the consultation and link to the project page. Prior to Council considering the matter, we will email people who have provided feedback (and who have not opted out of receiving updates) that a report will be submitted to council.



# How We Listen and Respond?

When an item is placed on exhibition the resulting report to Council will provide the findings of the community engagement. The council report will be a high level summary of engagement and may include:



Engagement and communications methods used;



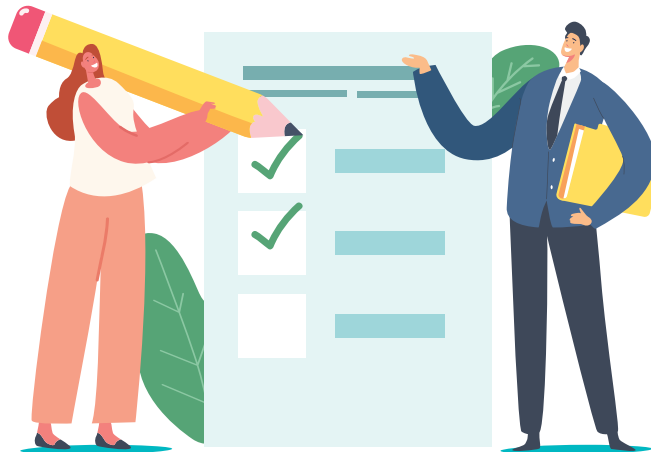
Participation and engagement data and sentiment;



Information about submissions/feedback received.

The report will summarise the submissions and provide a staff response. Submissions may be provided as an attachment.

Following a Council meeting, those who provided feedback (and who have not opted out of receiving updates) will be emailed Council's resolution. The Your Say project page be updated and a link to Agenda and Minutes will be accessible.



# Evaluation and Measurement

To measure and evaluate the effectiveness of our engagement, we assess:

- ✓ Measurable participation levels in engagement activities;
- ✓ The methods used and if they were appropriate and relevant to the stakeholders;
- ✓ If the responses were relevant to the plan or project;
- ✓ Verbal and written feedback from the community on the effectiveness of the engagement activities used and adequacy of the material and information to give informed feedback;
- ✓ Achievement of the engagement aims in the Community Engagement Strategy
- ✓ General and targeted monitoring in ensure diverse participation including input from under represented groups.



These evaluation results will be used to continually improve our engagement methods and inform future engagement strategies.

In line with the Integrated Planning and Reporting Framework (IP&R) this strategy will be reviewed within three months of the Local Government Election, as part of the broader review of the Community Strategic Plan, or as required in the event of legislative changes or requirements.



# Our Commitment to Engagement

This strategy provides a vision and framework to support community engagement, and delivering on this will require ongoing strengthening of capability within the Council and the community to support effective engagement.

## Putting our commitment into action

Action	Objectives	When
Launch an online engagement platform	Improve Council's online engagement by providing a platform that is equipped with a range of engagement tools to gather community feedback in real-time.	April 2023
Champion engagement across the organisation.	Harnessing organisational culture to support the consistent delivery of engagement activities across Council, and include as desired leadership quality and capability.	Ongoing
Creation of internal dashboard that exhibits customer and community satisfaction as a key performance indicator	Centralised overview of key performance indicators council wide.	September 2024
Establish centralised collection of community data and insights to support Council decision making and Council initiated projects for grants	Insights and data support decision making and prioritisation.	September 2024
Promotion of the Your Say platform as central engagement	Community access to information is vital to gain community input.	Ongoing
Build internal capability in data collection and survey design to ensure research method and channels utilised across the organisation are optimised.	Ability to gain quality input and as required representative input is important in ensuring data integrity and utilisation.	December 2023

Action	Objectives	When
Provide transparent communication of engagement results, from initial high level snapshots to post Council decision making communications.	Engagement snapshots provided to participants within a week of public exhibition period closing, providing participant with overviews of engagement activities and next steps.	July 2023
Provide staff information sessions	Ensure staff are familiar with Council's objective for community engagement, the level of engagement required, and the methods of engagement available to them and how to access and use these methods. Increase number of face to face interactions/consultations.	Ongoing
Staff to be trained in facilitation	Improve confidence and capability of staff to facilitate face to face interactions with groups.  Increase number of face to face interactions/consultations.	Ongoing
Budget and resourcing	Allocation of meaningful budget and resourcing to satisfy community engagement aims and standards outlined in this strategy	Ongoing
Improved clarity and communication of sought community participation as part of Council reports and resolution	Being clear on level of community participation (input level based on ability to influence) will ensure appropriate engagement methods and expectation management of Councillor and community.	October 2023
Consistent provision of community engagement outcomes to Council	Consistent presentation of data, including considered responses support transparency and informed decision making through the lens of risk, opportunity, impact and benefit.	August 2023
Assessment of the Community Consultation Committees against the resolutions of Council and in alignment of adopted Engagement Strategy.	Examining current engagement practices is critical to ensuring outcomes in line with expectations and enabling opportunity to explore potentially better methods to achieved desired outcome.	November 2023
Biennial Community Satisfaction and Needs Survey undertaken to receive insight to satisfaction and service level expectations and willingness to pay.	Survey design and subsequent outputs to assist in finalising draft operational plan and budget, and inform future four year delivery program.	April 2024

# Ready to have your say?

"Join our online community to share your views, keep up to date and help shape our region".



[Yoursay.dubbo.nsw.gov.au](https://Yoursay.dubbo.nsw.gov.au)



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