Shire of
**Broome**
*A future, for everyone*



# Community Engagement Framework

**Table of Contents**

**Introduction**

In July 2012 the Shire of Broome Council resolved to establish a working group to develop a Community Engagement Framework for the Shire of Broome as well as the process for its implementation and intended outcomes.

It is recognised that while the Shire of Broome currently undertakes a wide range of community engagement activities and there is expertise and experience within the organisation, it is considered that the development of a Community Engagement Framework will affirm the Shire's commitment to the principals of community engagement and consolidate and enhance its practice.

The Shire's Community Engagement Framework consists of three parts:
- *The Policy*, which underpins the Framework and provides a clear policy statement.
- *The 10 Step Guide*, which helps ensure that the community is aware and empowered to participate in civic life and provides transparent and accountable procedures for how the Shire of Broome will engage with the community.
- *The Toolkit/template*, which helps Shire officers develop engagement plans that are appropriate, relevant and consistent across the organisation.

**What is Community Engagement?**

Engagement involves a range of activities that allow community members to be informed of, involved in, and provide input into, Council activities and local issues.
These activities range from everyday informal discussions, contact with stakeholders during service delivery, group discussions or meetings and formal consultation processes through to Council supporting community members to take action on issues themselves.
Communities are complex and many issues involve a wide range of stakeholders often with different views and areas of interest.  Engagement activities need to incorporate the diversity and dynamics of the community, help different groups consider issues constructively and manage potentially conflicting interests. While engagement requires skills, resources and time, if it is planned and conducted well, it can be done efficiently and relatively easily.

**Why is Community Engagement Important?**

Traditionally, local government has relied on the community representation of elected Councillors to ensure that community issues and priorities are reflected in Council activities. This is still crucial but increasingly community members have an expectation of more direct involvement in providing input to Council priorities.
Not only is greater transparency and engagement with community expected, but it is also good business practice for Council. Successful engagement can improve strategic planning and service delivery, ensure that Council is addressing the priorities of the community and increase community support and collaboration.
Engagement does not mean that every detail of Council operation is open to community comment or control. Nor does it mean that staff will be distracted from their delivery of services.  There are many situations where engagement is not necessary or possible and the Community Engagement Framework is intended to clearly identify these situations.

## Levels of Engagement

Council and community stakeholders engage each other at different levels along a spectrum of increasing engagement.

The International Association for Public Participation (IAP2) has developed the Public Participation Spectrum to demonstrate the possible types of engagement with stakeholders and communities. The spectrum below has been amended from IAP2, and shows the increasing level of public impact as you progress from 'inform' through to 'empower'.

| INFORM | CONSULT | INVOLVE | COLLABORATE | EMPOWER |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Public Participation Goal: | | | | |
| To provide the public with balanced and objective information to assist them in understanding the problems, alternatives and/or solutions. | To obtain public feedback on analysis, alternatives and/or decisions. | To work directly with the public throughout the process to ensure that public concerns and aspirations are consistently understood and considered. | To partner with the public in each aspect of the decision including the development of alternatives and the identification of the preferred solution. | *Public make recommendations to Council* |
| Promise to the Public: | | | | |
| We will keep you informed. | We will keep you informed, listen to and acknowledge concerns and provide feedback on how public input influenced the decision. | We will work with you to ensure that your concerns and aspirations are directly reflected in the alternatives developed and provide feedback on how public input influenced the decision. | We will look to you for direct advice and innovation in formulating solutions and incorporate your advice and recommendations into the decisions to the maximum extent possible. | *Council will consider the recommendations.* |
| Example Tools: | | | | |
| Fact Sheets Web sites Open houses Media releases Project Bulletins | Public comment Focus groups Surveys Public meetings Targeted feedback eg. specific stakeholders | Workshops Project/Strategy planning Steering Committees | Advisory committees Consensus Building Participatory decision-making | *Council committees with delegated decision-making authority* |

The IAP2 Spectrum includes 'empower' as level of community engagement, where the final decision making power in the hands of the public. Under the Local Government Act 1995, the only way community members can make decisions on behalf of Council would be if Council delegated decision-making authority to a committee in accordance with the Act. This, although possible, only occurs in a very limited number of occasions and specific situations (ie management of a facility.) Therefore the Shire will not use the Empower category in its Community Engagement Matrix, and where Council deems this level to be required, it will resolve to establish such a Committee.

## Purpose and Objectives of the Community Engagement Framework

The purpose of the Community Engagement Framework is to establish a clear set of guidelines that informs the way the Shire of Broome engages with the community.
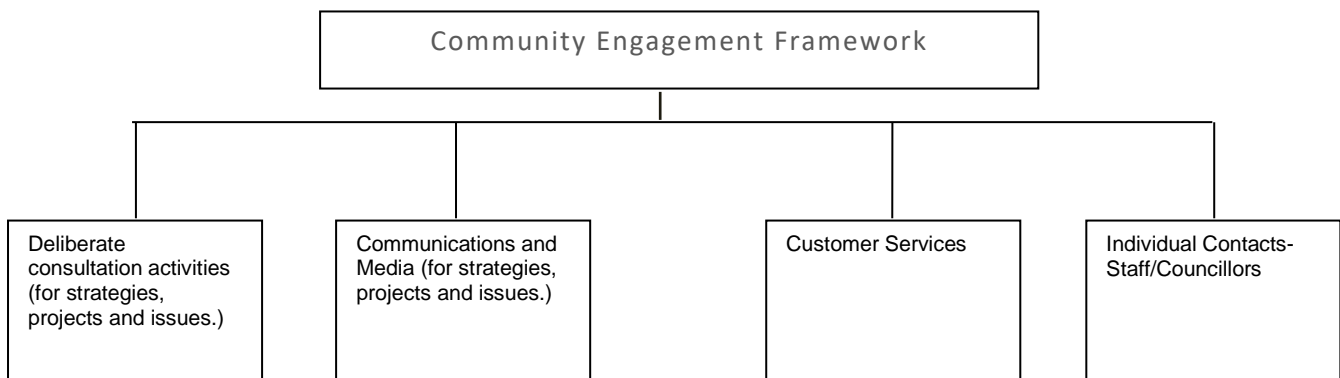The objectives of the Community Engagement Framework are to establish consistent and strategically targeted processes for community engagement and ensure those processes are implemented by Shire of Broome officers and external consultants. The Framework will also take into account the legislative requirements for consultation such as notices of application for a planning permit.
Using the Framework will facilitate improved decision making based on increased knowledge of community needs, aspirations and strengths. This will also help in targeting Shire of Broome resource and service priorities. Following the *10 Step Guide* will ensure that the community is kept updated about decisions that are informed by the community engagement process.
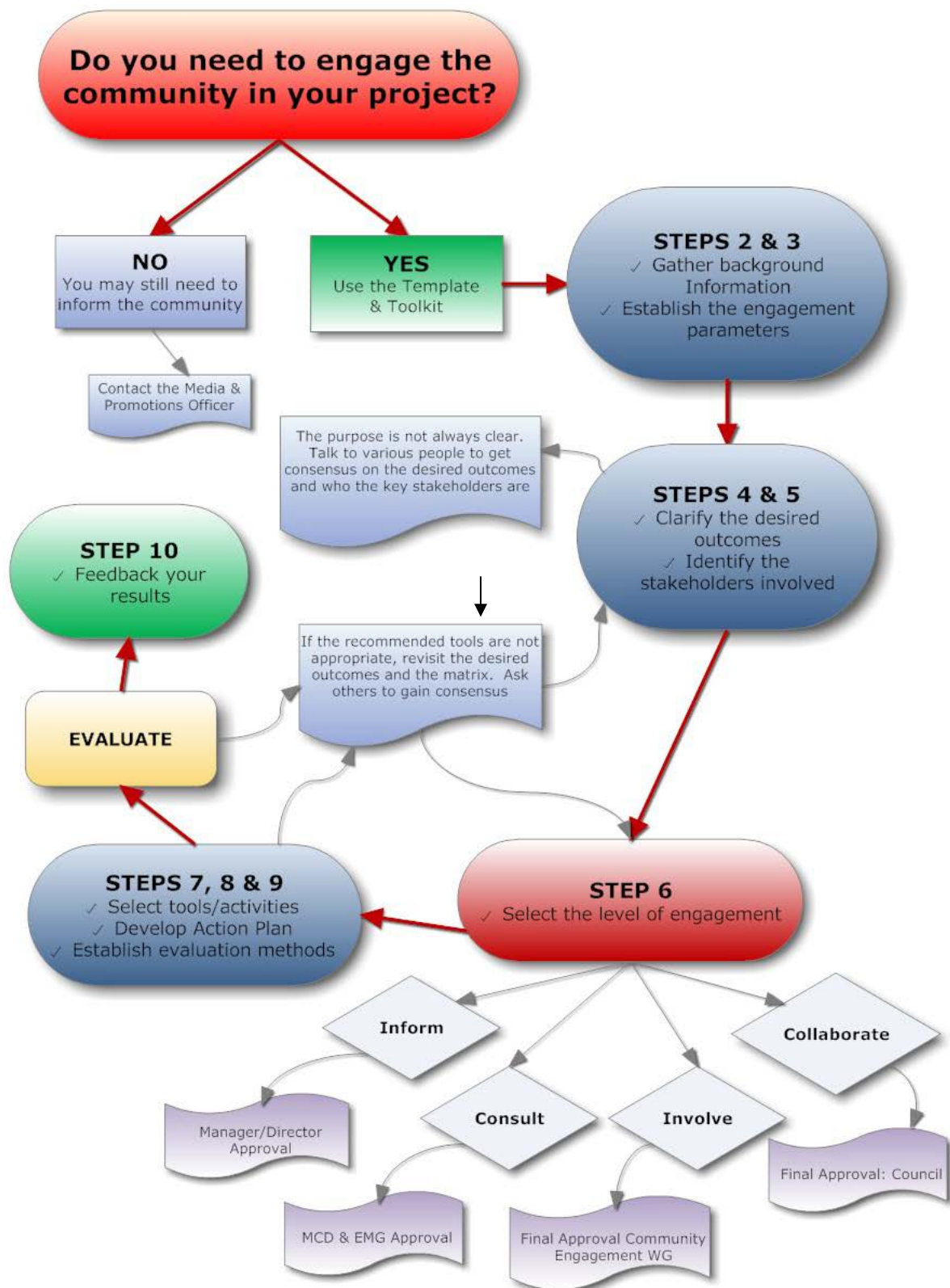The Framework will be relevant to many activities undertaken by the Shire. It will provide the community with a clear statement and guidelines for how the Shire will engage with it. It will also enable Council to implement one of the identified values in its Strategic Plan to *'actively consult, engage and communicate with, and on behalf of the community.'*

## Relationships with the Community Engagement Framework

Interaction with our community is happening daily and in various ways and means. This Framework has been developed to identify the extent and context in which the Shire of Broome interacts with its community.

```
┌─────────────────────────────────────────────────┐
│        Community Engagement Framework             │
└─────────────────────────────────────────────────┘

┌───────────────┐  ┌───────────────┐  ┌───────────────┐  ┌───────────────┐
│ Deliberate    │  │ Communications│  │ Customer      │  │ Individual    │
│ consultation  │  │ and Media (for│  │ Services      │  │ Contacts-     │
│ activities    │  │ strategies,   │  │               │  │ Staff/        │
│ (for strategies,│ │ projects and │  │               │  │ Councillors   │
│ projects and  │  │ issues.)      │  │               │  │               │
│ issues.)      │  │               │  │               │  │               │
└───────────────┘  └───────────────┘  └───────────────┘  └───────────────┘
```

**The Community Engagement Process**



Do you need to engage the community in your project?

**NO**
You may still need to inform the community

**YES**
Use the Template & Toolkit

**STEPS 2 & 3**
✓ Gather background Information
✓ Establish the engagement parameters

Contact the Media & Promotions Officer

The purpose is not always clear. Talk to various people to get consensus on the desired outcomes and who the key stakeholders are

**STEP 10**
✓ Feedback your results

**STEPS 4 & 5**
✓ Clarify the desired outcomes
✓ Identify the stakeholders involved

If the recommended tools are not appropriate, revisit the desired outcomes and the matrix. Ask others to gain consensus

**EVALUATE**

**STEPS 7, 8 & 9**
✓ Select tools/activities
✓ Develop Action Plan
✓ Establish evaluation methods

**STEP 6**
✓ Select the level of engagement

Inform

Collaborate

Consult

Involve

Manager/Director Approval

Final Approval: Council

MCD & EMG Approval

Final Approval Community Engagement WG

**Step 1: Determine if you need to undertake Community Engagement**

The first step is to determine if Community Engagement is necessary for your project or issue. One way to do this is to consider the following:

*"Will there be a CHANGE in the level of existing environment, space, accessibility, convenience, or provision of a service to the community?"*
                                        *and*
*"Is there opportunity for stakeholders to influence your project or its outcome? (ie the project or its outcome is not fixed or already determined)"*

**NO** - There may be no need to develop and implement a Community Engagement Plan. It may still be necessary to 'inform' relevant community members or groups, as appropriate, particularly if there is a *perceived* level of change from a community perspective. For example: an annual fee increase, changes to rubbish collection.

**YES** - The 10 Step Guide is for you! The steps that follow will help you to:

- clarify the decision that needs to be made

- determine the type of community engagement that will be appropriate

- design and implement a Community Engagement Plan

- undertake evaluation and

- clearly communicate the 'next steps' (feedback).

**Other considerations in making the decision to undertake Community Engagement**

What is the broader context of the project or issue at hand? When determining whether or not community engagement is necessary, also consider the following:

- Is there a history associated with the project or issue that may impact on the current situation?

- Does the project or issue have the potential to become highly politicised?

- Is there an opportunity to build or maintain a positive relationship through engaging proactively and openly with a section of the community?

- Is there a chance that there will be considerable public outrage if the community is displeased with, or feels no ownership over, the outcome?

**Where to start…**

The next steps and *Engagement Toolkit/template* have been developed to assist you with your project's community engagement.

**Step 2: Gather Background Information**

It is useful to provide background information which describes the key events and provides a clear outline as to the reason for community engagement. The information does not need to be extensive and it does not replace your Project's existing documentation, i.e. project brief etc.

Brief information to include may be the history, current status and information on what needs to happen to address the decision to be made.

Sources of background information may include the following:

- Council reports

- Briefing papers

- Shire records

- Community petitions

- Media clippings

- Internal and external reviews

- Shire staff with some involvement in the project

- Community groups and individuals

- Stakeholders

Please use the attached *toolkit/template* for your project

## Step 3: Establish Engagement Parameters

Parameters provide a clear description of the limitations, the negotiables and non-negotiables involved in a project. Setting parameters is necessary to provide Council with a starting point or baseline that allows for realistic expectations. All resources have limitations and therefore effective allocation is dependent upon the technical, budgetary and human resources available, and/or legislative requirements. The key parameters to consider are:

**Legislative** – is there any legislation that determines what consultation needs to occur?

**Geographic boundaries** - the areas selected to include in the community engagement.

**Budget** – Funds available for a project will drive what can be expected and provided. It is unfair and unwise to raise the expectations of stakeholders by asking them what they want and then telling them they cannot have it because of a shortage of funds. The cost of community engagement increases as the method of community engagement becomes more complex. It is important to know what funds are available for community engagement to avoid having to withdraw from a process due to lack of funds.

By using the *10 Steps* you can work out the cost of community engagement and include it in your project proposal so that the total budget can be considered upfront, and not as an after-thought.

**Timelines** - Communities need enough time to participate in a community engagement process. Are there legislative requirements for the time of consultation or the schedule of Council meetings to consider?

Please use the attached *toolkit/template* for your project.

## Step 4: Clarify the Engagement Purpose and Objectives

Ask yourself what the outcome is that you seek from your engagement, as well as the experience you are trying to create for participants.

It is important to be *clear* about what the intended outcome or purpose is. Being unclear is a common reason for tension between Councils and communities and why some issues seem to remain unresolved over a long period of time. **Try to speak to a number of different people about what they see as the purpose of engagement for your project. There are often varying views, so the more consensus gained, the more chance you have of people agreeing with it.**

An example of an engagement purpose objective is:
*To ensure there are equitable opportunities for all staff to influence how the Shire's Social Club will be managed by the Shire.*
Please use the attached *toolkit/template* for your project.

## Step 5: Identify the Stakeholders

A stakeholder is defined as someone who may be affected by or have a specific interest in the decision or issue under consideration.

There are various ways to categorise stakeholders. However it is important to have a consistent approach to ensure equitable inclusion of all potential stakeholders who reflect the demographics of the community. Not only will this ensure a credible process and equitable representation, but the approach will help to develop community trust in the process.

The Shire has chosen to sort stakeholders into primary, secondary and tertiary groups (a method used in project management.)

**Primary stakeholders** are those who have a direct interest in an outcome such as: Councillors, key community members, groups and businesses who live/operate in or near the location of a project or who will be directly affected by a project or decision (this may include "absent owners" of leased/rented business or residential properties). The direct interest could be proximity or economic.
**Secondary stakeholders** are those who have a general interest in a project or issue such as Council staff working on a project, people who live and work in the broader Council area, business owners, community groups in the Council area and consultants involved in a project.
**Tertiary stakeholders** are those that do not always fit neatly into the primary or secondary stakeholder category depending on the nature of the community engagement, such as: State and Federal Government authorities/agencies, non-government agencies and organisations and the media.

Please use the *Toolkit/template* for your project.

## Step 6: Determine Level of Engagement (matrix and matrix scoresheet)

Council and community stakeholders engage each other at different levels on a spectrum of increasing engagement.
The International Association for Public Participation (IAP2) has developed the Public Participation Spectrum to demonstrate the possible types of engagement with stakeholders

and communities. The spectrum also shows the increasing level of public impact as you progress from 'inform' through to 'empower'. The Shire has adapted this as follows:

| INFORM | CONSULT | INVOLVE | COLLABORATE | EMPOWER |
|--------|---------|---------|-------------|---------|
| Public Participation Goal: | | | | |
| To provide the public with balanced and objective information to assist them in understanding the problems, alternatives solutions | To obtain public feedback on analysis, alternatives and/or decisions. | To work directly with the public throughout the process to ensure that public concerns and aspirations are consistently understood and considered. | To partner with the public in each aspect of the decision including the development of alternatives and the identification of the preferred solution. | *Public make recommendations to Council.* |
| Promise to the Public: | | | | |
| We will keep you informed. | We will keep you informed, listen to and acknowledge concerns and provide feedback on how public input influenced the decision. | We will work with you to ensure that your concerns and aspirations are directly reflected in the alternatives developed and provide feedback on how public input influenced the decision. | We will look to you for direct advice and innovation in formulating solutions and incorporate your advice and recommendations into the decisions to the maximum extent possible. | *Council will consider the recommendations* |

The selection of a level or levels of community engagement will be driven by the expectations of internal and external stakeholders. It is important to be aware of and understand the source and nature of these expectations.

Consideration will need to be given to the following:
- Background information: Council Reports, Briefing Papers, Project Scopes and Reviews.
- Level of interest from community as perceived by staff and Council.
- Level of interest being shown by the community.
- Underlying values and views of internal and external stakeholders.
- Degree of complexity – is there a single issue or multiple issues?
- Degree of potential community impact and/or outrage – what is the general community perception of the issue/s?
- Media interest.
- Level of resources available – time, budget, human.

**Community Engagement Matrix:**

The Community Engagement Matrix below is a tool designed to assist with the selection of a level of engagement. The axes on the Matrix relate to "degree of complexity, and potential community impact /political sensitivity".  Measures on a scale of 1 - 6 are set out to provide further definition.
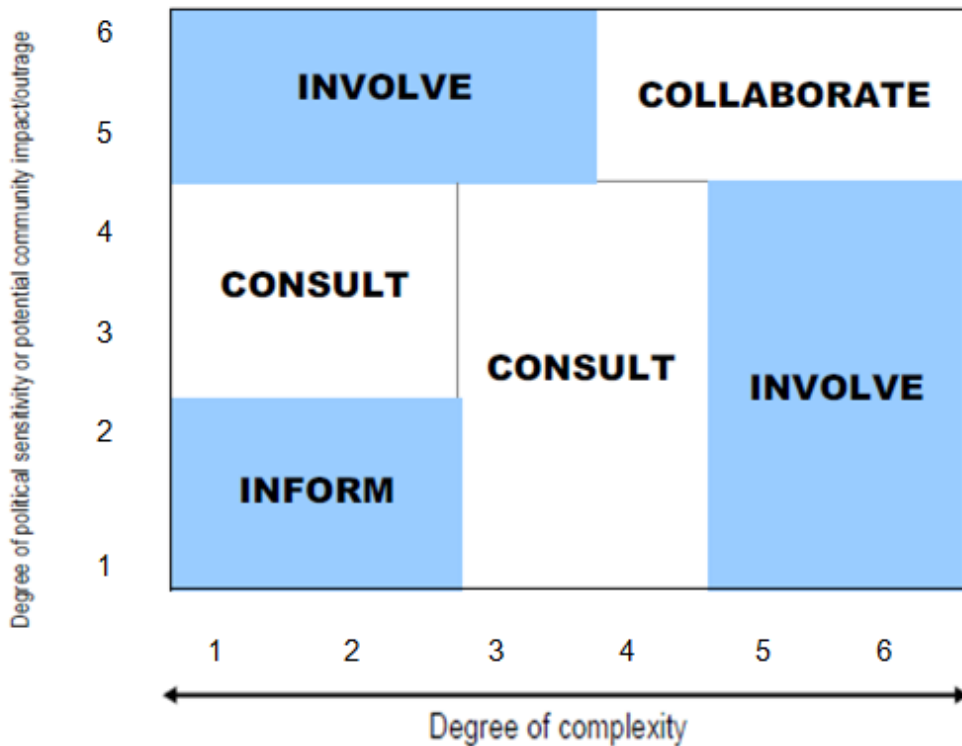
*The table below will help you determine the level of engagement for your project. Consider your project and the statements below and place your response in the right hand column:*

| | SCORE 1 - 2 | SCORE 3 - 4 | SCORE 5 - 6 | Your Project |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Degree of complexity | There is one clear issue and or problem that needs to be addressed. | There are more than one or two issues/problems that can be resolved. | There are multiple issues/problems and it is unclear how to resolve them. | |

| | SCORE 1 - 2 | SCORE 3 - 4 | SCORE 5 - 6 | Your Project |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Degree of potential community impact and political sensitivity | The project will have little effect on communities and they will hardly notice any changes.<br><br>The project has acceptance throughout the community. | The project will fix a problem that will benefit communities and the change will cause minor inconvenience.<br><br>There are groups in communities who may see potential in raising the profile of a project to gain attention for their cause. | The project will create a change that will have an impact on communities and the living environment and the degree of impact/outrage and acceptance will vary.<br><br>Community expectations about the project are different to those of the decision makers and there is high potential for individuals and groups to use the uncertainty to gain attention. | |

Your project score for Degree of Complexity: _____
Your project score for Degree of Community Impact/Political Sensitivity: _____
Using these scores on the graph above will indicate your project's engagement level.
Please use the attached *Toolkit/template* for your project.

**Inform** – Manager and Director need to approve the Engagement Plan (Media and Promotions Officer needs to be involved to help develop printed materials and media items).
**Consult and Involve** – As above and Community Development needs to be involved in helping to develop your plan. The Executive Management Group (EMG) needs to approve the plan.
**Collaborate** – As above and Council needs to approve the plan.

## Step 7: Select Tools/Activities

Selecting the right engagement tool or activity is an essential step for a successful decision making outcome.  The below table is an amended extract from the IAP2 Spectrum which indicates examples of techniques suited to each level of community engagement.

| INFORM | CONSULT | INVOLVE | COLLABORATE | EMPOWER |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Example Tools: | | | | |
| Fact Sheets<br>Web sites<br>Open houses<br>Media releases<br>Project Bulletins | Public comment<br>Focus groups<br>Surveys<br>Public meetings<br>Targeted feedback eg. specific stakeholders | Workshops<br>Project/Strategy planning<br>Steering Committees<br>Field Trips<br>Deliberate polling | Citizen Advisory Committees<br>Consensus Building<br>Participatory decision-making | *Committees of Council (with delegated authority*) |

More examples of tools/activities are set out in the *Toolkit/Template*, to show what techniques work most effectively with the levels of inform, consult, involve, collaborate on the spectrum.

## Step 8: Develop Action Plan

The Community Engagement Action Plan puts all the pieces of the plan together and presents a snapshot of the tasks required and the operational decisions to be made. Below is an example of what one looks like:

| Date | Tool/Activity | Stakeholders involved | Person Responsible | Budget | Status | Communication /message |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| *8 July* | *Focus group* | *Staff* | *Bridget* | *Nil* | *0%* | *Start after xxx* |

Please use the attached *Toolkit/template* for your project

## Step 9: Establish Evaluation Methods

In *Step Two* you outlined what the intended outcome of your engagement was – i.e. the purpose of the Community Engagement.  Now you need to identify *'how will you know you have gotten there?'* What are the evaluation measures you will take once the Community Engagement has occurred?

It is important to establish these before the Community Engagement is actually undertaken. Ask yourself the following questions:

1. What needs to happen for this process to be a 'success'? (consider the perspectives of both Council and community/stakeholders)

2. How will we know if this has been achieved? (i.e. visible sign of success)

3. What data will you need to indicate this? (what will you need to demonstrate the results)

4. How will you collect this data? (participant feedback, surveys, informal discussions etc):

5. How will you document the learning's (both positive and negative) from this process, for future learning for yourself and other in the Shire of Broome?

Please use the attached *Toolkit/template* for your project.

## Step 10: Reporting/ Feedback of Results

Following the Community Engagement process, you will need to collate the data you have obtained, as per your evaluation questions (previous step), analyse it and write a report or summary to the decision makers (often Council).

Use your evaluative data to compile a report that reflects on the process as well as the outcome.

It is important for participants to know before the process commences how their input/feedback will be used. Equally important is informing participants about how they themselves will receive feedback about their involvement in the process, and the resulting outcome or decision.

If the project is a longer-term, or on-going one, it is important to keep participants updated on its progress.

Please use the attached *Toolkit/template* for your project.