

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

Previous policy number: 1.1.6

Policy Statement

Council views community engagement as critical to its effective, transparent and accountable governance and encourages community members to actively participate in decisions that affect their lives. It recognises that the ideas, knowledge and skills of the community can enhance the decision making process.

Best practice, consistent engagement processes assist Council to make decisions that are in the best interest of the whole community, while considering its budgetary, resourcing and legislative obligations.

This policy also encompasses, and is applicable to, internal engagement practices where administrative decisions or issues are likely to affect employees and/or Elected Members.

Policy Details

This policy supports the Community Engagement Framework which has been informed by the International Association of Public Participation (IAP2) core values.

The Town of Mosman Park will determine the appropriate level of community engagement by assessing the following:

- a) Is community engagement required by law, policy or by agreement with a government agency or statutory body?
- b) Can community input improve a project or enhance decision making?
- c) Is further investigation of community needs required before making a decision?
- d) Has the community expressed interest or concern in the pending decision?
- e) Will the decision have a significant impact on the community?

The following Principles will apply to all community engagement processes undertaken by the Town of Mosman Park

1. Purpose and scope clearly defined

- a) Each community engagement activity will have a clearly defined scope to determine what level of engagement is most appropriate.
- b) The planning process will include due consideration of the number and types of stakeholders, the time required, the financial impact, other events and activities

that are occurring and may impact the engagement process, and resourcing requirements of the preferred engagement strategy/ies.

2. Open and inclusive

- a) Consistent with the Towns Disability Access and Inclusion Plan, The Town will endeavour to present information in an accessible format, to choose venues appropriate to the engagement strategy being used and to consider accessibility issues.
- b) All community engagement processes will be open and transparent.
- c) The Town will endeavour to ensure that all persons or organisations affected by a decision will be provided with an opportunity to participate in the community engagement process.
- d) Engagement will be undertaken in good faith with all participants being given an opportunity to be heard.
- e) Where appropriate, the Town will seek to understand the concerns and interests of the community and stakeholders, and provide opportunities for participants to appreciate each other's perspectives.
- f) Feedback will be recorded, analysed, and where appropriate, used to inform future engagement processes.

3. Being responsive and providing feedback

- a) The Town will, in a timely manner, provide feedback to participants on the progress of issues, and on decisions made.
- b) Where possible the rationale for the decision will be communicated to all stakeholders.

4. Accountability and evaluation

- a) While the Town will use community engagement to enhance its decision making, Council accepts responsibility and accountability for the final decision.
- b) The Town will monitor and evaluate engagement processes.

5. Timing

- a) Community engagement will be undertaken early enough in the process to ensure that participants have enough time to consider the matter at hand and provide meaningful feedback.
- b) All engagement processes will have clear timeframes that will be communicated to participants.
- c) Wherever possible the Town will not undertake engagement processes over the period mid-December to mid-January.

6. Resources

- a) The Town will allocate sufficient time, as well as financial, human and technical resources to support community engagement (including the engagement of external facilitators and/or advisors if needed).
- b) As a minimum, the time allocated for engagement processes will be what is required to meet statutory or legislative requirements.

Definitions

“Community” means all Mosman Park residents, visitors, ratepayers, businesses, sporting and community organisations who reside or work within Council boundaries and who are likely to be affected by the issue or decision.

“Community Engagement” Council’s definition of Community Engagement is based on the United Nations Declaration on Community Engagement (2005). Council defines community engagement as a two way process of dialogue by which the aspirations, concerns, needs and values of our local community and others who may be impacted are incorporated into policy development, planning, decision making, service delivery and assessment.

“Council” and “Councillors” refer to the Elected Members who comprise the Town of Mosman Park Council.

“Employees” refers to the executive and staff who work at the Town of Mosman Park.

“Town of Mosman Park” and **“Town”** refer to the organisational entity comprising Council and employees.

Governance References

Statutory Compliance	Mosman Park Town Planning Scheme
Organisational Compliance	Community Engagement Framework

Policy Administration

Directorate:		Officer title:
Executive Services		Manager Community Development
Next Review		Review Cycle
2024		Five years
Version	Date	Ref
1	27 March 2012	OCM-056-2012
2	22 October 2019	OCM-142-2019