1.13   Community Engagement Policy

Policy Owner	Executive Director Community Services
Responsible Officer	Manager Community Relations
Date of Approval	01/07/2025
Amended/Revised	03/07/2025

Objective

The Community Engagement Policy aims to help the City of Albany (the City) engage more effectively with stakeholders and the community. Engagement can make better decisions that reflect the interests and concerns of potentially affected people and entities while also providing an opportunity to develop stronger relationships with the community and/or stakeholders and build the capacity of groups.

This policy affirms the City of Albany's commitment to community engagement and the use of associated guidelines and processes, being:

- **Guidelines**: Community Engagement Guidelines; and

- **Toolkit**: City of Albany Community Engagement Staff Toolkit.

- **Template**: City of Albany Community Engagement Project Template.

Note: For Statutory planning matters, the Council has adopted a specific policy position that directs how these principles will be applied to community engagement and consultation.

Scope

The development and review of all Council strategies, business plans, policies, and procedures.

Policy Statement

The City is a proactive organisation that actively engages with the community to enhance decision-making, build relationships and empower the community.

The City is willing to listen to and value what community members have to say. The City seeks to use the ideas, knowledge and skills of the community to enhance decision-making and work collaboratively to improve our community.

Community engagement assists the City to provide good governance and strong leadership, delivering better decisions that guide the City's priorities into the future.

The City is committed to strengthening Albany through effective community engagement, sharing information, gathering views and opinions, and developing options to support decision-making. The City also supports and facilitates community-led projects where possible to strengthen and empower our community.

This policy does not negate the need for the City to comply with all statutory obligations.

The following community engagement principles apply to all community engagement undertaken by the City of Albany:

Commitment	Effective policymaking requires strong leadership and a dedicated commitment to providing resources for public engagement and participation, including financial, personnel, and technical support.
Inclusiveness	Consultation will be conducted to engage all affected parties, ensuring sensitivity to diverse needs and maximising opportunities for participation.
Clarity	Clear objectives and defined boundaries for information, consultation, and participation, along with transparent stakeholder roles and responsibilities, are essential from the outset.
Timing	Early community engagement and active participation enhance solution diversity and improve best practice outcomes, requiring sufficient time for effective consultation throughout all project stages.
Transparency	Stakeholders need clarity on the purpose and scope of consultations, including limitations and potential influence, while also receiving regular updates on progress and outcomes.
Resources	For effective public involvement in major planning projects, sufficient financial, personnel, and technical resources are essential, alongside a supportive organisational culture and access to relevant skills.
Accountability	The City must be accountable for utilising community and stakeholder input received through feedback, consultation, and participation by ensuring an open, transparent process amenable to external scrutiny and review.

Legislative and Strategic Context

This item relates to the following elements of the City of Albany Strategic Community Plan 2032:

- **Pillar**: Leadership
- **Objectives:**
  - Provide strong, accountable leadership
  - Grow awareness, understanding and engagement in City projects, activities and decisions
- **Strategies:**
  - Facilitate engagement with socially and culturally diverse groups to inform Council decisions, including younger people, people with disability, the Menang Noongar People and other cultural groups.
  - A well-informed and engaged community

Review Position and Date

Policy to be reviewed annually.

Associated Documents

Documents that have a bearing on this policy and that may be useful reference material for users of this policy, follow:

- City of Albany Community Engagement Guidelines and Toolkit

- Communications & Engagement Strategy 2024-2027

- Quality Assurance Standard for Community and Stakeholder Engagement – IAP2 Australasia *(formally known as the IAP2 Quality Assurance Standard for Community & Stakeholder Engagement)*

Definitions

Key terms and acronyms used in the policy, and their definitions:

- **Corporate Documents:** Strategies, policies, procedures, business plans, and associated documents, including guidelines and forms.

- **Statutory Documents:** Corporate documents whose format and layout are guided by legislative requirements, i.e. budgets, town planning schemes, and annual reports.

- **Strategy:** A plan made in advance of actions that identifies, serves and complements the City's major strategic goals and objectives.

- **Policy:** A governing principle, set of principles or rules that guides the City's practices and constrains procedures or delegated functions.

- **Procedure:** A prescription of specific action-oriented processes necessary to achieve strategic or policy objectives.

- **Business Plan:** A plan that forecasts the critical aspects, basic assumptions and financial projections for an existing or proposed City trading enterprise or community service facility.

- **Guidelines:** An operational guide that provides tools to guide staff through a process to undertake a specific function.

- **The Community:** Those who live, work or recreate in Albany.

- **Community Engagement:** Community engagement is a purposeful and inclusive process through which the City works respectfully with the local community to shape decisions, actions, impacts, or change (source: IAP2).

  It encompasses a spectrum of interactions between the City and the community, including:
  - **Information-sharing** – Keeping the community informed and promoting understanding.
  - **Consultation** – Seeking feedback and involving community members consistently to ensure their concerns and aspirations are understood and considered.
  - **Collaboration** – Working together with community members in each aspect of decision-making.
  - **Co-design or partnership** – Jointly developing solutions with the community and/or stakeholders.
  - **Empowerment** – Enabling the community to make the final decision.