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The City of Cockburn’s Community Engagement Framework has been developed with input from Mayor and Councillors, executive managers, staff, residents, and representatives from advisory groups, committees, residents’ associations, businesses and local community groups.

The Framework focuses on people. The term ‘community’ relates to all of the people who live, work, visit and invest in the City of Cockburn.

The Framework has been informed by a range of community engagement plans from local, state and federal government authorities in Australia and beyond. It seeks to be practical and aspirational, reflecting the values embodied in the City of Cockburn’s Strategic Community Plan, Cockburn Community Development Strategic Plan, Communications Strategy and Action Plan, and Disability Access and Inclusion Plan.

This Community Engagement Framework is unique to the City of Cockburn. It incorporates words, phrases, case studies and tips collected during the consultation process with stakeholders to reflect as closely as possible the voices of people who live and work in the City of Cockburn. Engaging internal and external stakeholders in conversation about engagement demonstrates the City of Cockburn’s commitment to supporting and contributing to a community in which people can feel a sense of belonging, connection and contribution.

The City of Cockburn has adopted a Community Engagement Model which has three strategies – information, consultation and active participation. The Framework is intended as an implementation guide for staff and supports the City’s Community Engagement Policy.

People with diverse needs and interests have contributed to the development of this Framework, including:

- Mayor and Councillors
- Executive team and staff
- Ratepayers
- Residents
- Businesses
- Community groups and associations

We heard from a diverse group of people in the community:

- Young people, aged 4 to 12
- Youth, aged 13+
- Parents
- Seniors
- People affected by a disability or impairment
- People with culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds (CaLD), including Indigenous

Discussions were held with representatives from various community groups, covering:

- Safety and emergency services
- Conservation and the environment
- Sport and recreation
- Culture
- Education
- Local neighbourhoods
In line with the Communication’s Strategy and Action Plan 2012-2017, the purpose of the Community Engagement Framework is to improve the City of Cockburn’s community consultation and engagement processes by developing an engagement model that results in improved trust and respect between the City and its stakeholders.

The Framework recognises that much of the daily work of the City of Cockburn directly and indirectly impacts its stakeholders. To embed a culture of engagement, this Framework outlines a ten step process that:

- establishes standardised practices for conducting community engagement across the organisation;
- ensures that all legislative and statutory regulations are met and, where possible, exceeded; and
- ensures that stakeholders have the opportunity to contribute to the policies, plans, events and issues that affect their lives.

When legislative or statutory regulations or Council policies and plans exist which address specific information and communication processes, they must take precedence.
What is Community Engagement?

The Integrated Planning and Reporting Framework defines community engagement in the following way:

Community engagement ensures communities can participate in decisions that affect them, and at a level that meets their expectations. It helps strengthen the relationship between communities and government, enabling stakeholders to become part of the process, while assisting to build consensus.

At the City of Cockburn, community engagement refers to the way in which people interact and connect on policies, projects, events and issues to make the City of Cockburn an attractive place to live, work, visit and invest in.

During roundtable workshops held in late 2013, internal and external stakeholders were asked to articulate what community engagement means within the City of Cockburn.

To internal stakeholders, community engagement means:

- effective information flow
- opportunities to have a say on issues that affect the community
- learning about the community’s values, needs and attitudes towards various projects, developments and issues in order to achieve the best outcomes for all stakeholders
- process of getting the community more involved in the local area, building networks and relationships, and engaging in effective dialogue

To external stakeholders, community engagement means:

- communicating well with the community; making people aware of what’s happening and local issues that affect their lives
- providing the community with opportunities to have a say about what is considered to be important, if and when wanted
- connecting people together to improve lives, to help progress the City and create a harmonious and healthy environment
- being actively involved in activities and decision-making in regards to where and how people live, work and play

Community engagement is not about:

- promising to meet community needs and expectations all the time, because decision-makers cannot keep everyone happy all the time;
- consulting on every single decision, because this may not be possible or feasible due to time constraints, budget restrictions or other factors; or
- assuming that everyone in the community will want to be engaged all of the time on every issue.
The community engages with the City of Cockburn in varying degrees, based on factors such as willingness, capacity, availability and interest. While there is an increasing focus by local government on active citizenship, not all stakeholders wish to be involved. Therefore, the key focus of the City of Cockburn’s Community Engagement Framework is providing all stakeholders with the opportunity to engage.

Derived from Latin, the word opportunity refers to an appropriate time, situation or condition favourable for the attainment of a goal. During roundtable workshops held as part of the development of this Framework, internal and external stakeholders related ‘opportunity’ to eight areas.

Guiding Principles

Commitment
Strong organisational commitment within the City of Cockburn to informing, consulting and facilitating active participation.

Resources
Adequate financial, human and technical resources to enable effective information, consultation and active participation. Where resources are limited, stakeholders to whom the policy, project, event or issue impacts the most are provided the greatest opportunity to access information, be consulted and actively participate.

Time
Adequate time, planning and preparation are provided to enable information, consultation and active participation. Ideally, stakeholders want early notification, advanced warning and adequate time to prepare, process and respond so that they can be informed, consulted and actively participate in matters that impact their lives.

Feedback
That the City of Cockburn accounts for the use it makes of stakeholders’ input through the delivery of feedback.

Inclusive
That access to information, consultation and active participation accommodates minority and hard to reach groups.

Information
Access to information that is sufficiently detailed and appropriately pitched so that stakeholders have the capacity to be informed and understand the impact of policies, projects, events or issues. Both internal and external stakeholders feel that unless explanations and analyses of policies, plans, events and issues are provided, the opportunity to engage may be lost.

Purpose
Objectives for and limits to information, consultation and active participation are clear from the outset so that expectations and boundaries are clear. Regardless of the level of engagement, it is the City of Cockburn that is ultimately the responsible governing body.

Reflection
That the City of Cockburn maintains a consultation register and reporting system to ensure that it learns from community engagement activity.
There is no ‘one size fits all’ model for stakeholder engagement. Internal and external stakeholders reviewed a range of engagement models including the popular IAP2 Spectrum of Public Participation. The City of Cockburn adapted the OECD’s engagement model to summarise its interactions and connections with its stakeholders. [“Citizens as Partners: OECD Handbook on Information, Consultation and Public Participation in Policy Making”, OECD: 2001]

The City of Cockburn’s Community Engagement Framework is based on three strategies – information, consultation and active participation. This engagement model was preferred by stakeholders because it is simple and avoids confusing and overlapping terminology.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>STRATEGY</th>
<th>DESCRIPTION</th>
<th>GOAL</th>
<th>CITY OF COCKBURN EXAMPLES</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Information</td>
<td>Mostly one-way, information flow in which the City of Cockburn disseminates and communicates information to stakeholders.</td>
<td>To provide stakeholders with information about decisions, policies, plans, events and issues.</td>
<td>Fortnightly paid advertisement ‘Cockburn Update’ in the Cockburn Gazette</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Articles about Council decisions in <em>Cockburn Soundings</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Consultation</td>
<td>A two-way consultative relationship between the City of Cockburn and its stakeholders in which the City invites and receives feedback on specific issues, policies, plans and events.</td>
<td>To capture stakeholder input and feedback to better inform decisions.</td>
<td>Community Perceptions Survey</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Business Perceptions Survey</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Community dialogue workshops conducted as part of the Strategic Community Plan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Community feedback and comments invited on off-leash dog exercise area</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Active Participation</td>
<td>A mutual and active partnership between the City of Cockburn and stakeholders, whereby stakeholders actively engage and shape policy while acknowledging that the final responsibility rests with the City.</td>
<td>To work jointly with stakeholders to shape policies, plans, events and issues.</td>
<td>Supporting community-led initiatives like the Cockburn Men’s Shed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Aboriginal Reference Group’s input into the Reconciliation Action Plan</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
There are 10 steps for developing a Community Engagement Plan. Each engagement situation is different. As you work through the Framework considering each step, you may need to revisit steps or consider them in an order which is more appropriate to your situation.

**Community Engagement Plan**

**Step 1:** Decide if community engagement is needed

**Step 2:** Assess the impacts

**Step 3:** Address legal requirements

**Step 4:** Determine objectives

**Step 5:** Determine methods of engagement

**Step 6:** Determine when engagement will occur

**Step 7:** Resource the Plan

**Step 8:** Manage Risks

**Step 9:** Provide feedback

**Step 10:** Reflect on the lessons learned

**Implement the Plan**
**Step 1: Decide if community engagement is needed**

The work we do at the City of Cockburn and the decisions we make often have a direct or indirect impact on the community.

Clearly describe the current situation. This may be the policy, plan, project, decision, service, event or issue that you need to engage the community about.

Consider and discuss the size and nature of changes that are being proposed.

If you’re making a decision or implementing a change that will impact the community, you will need to prepare a Community Engagement Plan.

If you are unsure as to whether a Community Engagement Plan is required, check with your manager and/or the Community Development Officer.

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**When should we engage the community?**

The City engages the community on various matters, including:

- Policy development, implementation and application
- Planning scheme development, implementation and application
- Ongoing delivery of council services, projects and operations
- Capital works projects
- Council decisions
- Community and social planning to identify community needs
- Organisational planning and strategy
- Evaluating the community’s level of satisfaction with Council’s performance
- Events
Step 2: Assess the impacts

The Community Engagement Plan needs to consider:

- Who is likely to be impacted?
- How are they likely to be impacted?
- To what degree are stakeholders likely to be impacted?

When resources are limited, prioritise stakeholders who are impacted the most. Internal stakeholders may include:

- Elected Members
- Executive Team
- Staff
- Reference and advisory groups

External stakeholders may include:

- Ratepayers
- Residents
- Business owners and managers
- People who work in the area
- Visitors
- Customers of the City’s services and facilities
- Community groups
- Residents’ and business associations
- Local schools
- Other local government authorities
- Regional Councils
- Federal and State Government departments
- Federal and State Government politicians
- Media

The selection of stakeholders will depend on the purpose of engagement. However, the following questions help in identifying appropriate stakeholders:

- Which individuals or groups have an interest in the issue?
- Who are the community champions and opinion leaders?
- Who else may be influential?
- Who is critical to delivery?
- Are there any barriers to information, consultation or active participation such as language, age or literacy?
- Who can stop or slow the project?

There are various groups in the community with special interests and needs to consider, such as:

- Children / youth / students
- Families / parents
- Seniors / pensioners
- People affected by a disability or impairment
- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders
- Culturally and Linguistically Diverse Communities
- Economically disadvantaged
- Men / women

Need to access hard to reach people in the community or people with special interests? Consider talking to a reference group. A reference group is made up of community members with special interests and/or expertise that provide advice to Council as needed. A full listing of the City’s reference groups can be found on the Staff Portal.
The Children’s Reference Group: An example of how reference groups work in the City of Cockburn

The Children’s Reference Group is one of a number of reference groups currently active within the City of Cockburn. Evolving from the Children’s Services Plan 2010–2015, the Group facilitates children's input into planning and development, events and programs, and issues of relevance to children and their families. To members of the Children’s Reference Group, community engagement means “bringing the community together” and “working together as a team”. The Group meets as needed to express their opinions, thoughts and ideas in age-appropriate ways.

WHAT DOES THE CHILDREN’S REFERENCE GROUP DO?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>WHAT CHILDREN SAY:</th>
<th>WHAT PARENTS SAY:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>We learn about things like playgrounds so we can provide feedback</td>
<td>It creates a ‘civic’ sense by giving the children a chance to contribute</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>We discuss what would make Cockburn a better place</td>
<td>It’s a good learning experience to take on a leadership role outside of school</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>We represent the voice of kids</td>
<td>It helps them learn from an early age to be part of the community and contribute to it</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>We make a budget to support children’s activities like skateboard workshops</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>We talk about a range of kids activities so Council knows what kids like</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>We take photos and draw pictures of things we like and dislike about Cockburn</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>We meet with the Mayor</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Step 3: Address legal requirements

Local government legislation and statutory regulations set minimum standards for community engagement, often including clauses that detail when, how and with whom engagement is to be carried out.

It is important to identify relevant and current legislative and statutory regulations:
- What are the minimum standards for community engagement as required by legislative and statutory regulations?
- What Acts and Sections are applicable?
- Which Council plans, policies, strategies or reports are relevant?
- Are there any parts of the engagement process supported or constrained by legislation?

For assistance in this area when developing a Community Engagement Plan, please consult the City’s Governance Officer.

To support a vibrant community engagement culture as envisaged by the Community Development Strategic Plan 2011–2014, the City of Cockburn may need to move beyond compliance to create opportunities for engagement.

Best practice is encouraged at the City of Cockburn.

Possible legislation to consider:
- Privacy Act 1988
- WA Local Government Act 1995 and Regulations
- Health Act 1911 and Associated Regulations
- Metropolitan Region Town Planning Scheme Act 1959
- Heritage of WA Act 1990
- Occupational Health, Safety and Welfare Act 1984 and Associated Regulations
- Environmental Protection Act 1986
- Bush Fires Act 1954 and Associated Regulations
- Plus many more

Remember to meet the requirements in the Disability Access & Inclusion Plan, including:
- People with disabilities have opportunities to access the services of, and any event organised by the City of Cockburn
- People with a disability receive information in a format that will enable them to access the information as readily as other people are able to access it
- People with a disability have the same opportunity as other people to participate in public consultation by the City of Cockburn
Step 4: Determine the objectives

At the City of Cockburn, community engagement covers a spectrum of opportunities ranging from informing and consulting to active participation. Clearly define what you hope to achieve from the community engagement process within each level of engagement. You may like to take this one step further by determining what community engagement aims to achieve at each level for each stakeholder group.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>LEVEL OF ENGAGEMENT</th>
<th>POSSIBLE OBJECTIVES</th>
<th>LEVEL OF COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Informing</td>
<td>Inform or educate stakeholders</td>
<td>Lower</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Provide stakeholders with appropriate information about policies, plans, projects, events, issues or decisions</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Explain what’s going to happen</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Explain where further information can be found</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Consulting</td>
<td>Seek local knowledge and feedback on pre-determined options from interested stakeholders</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Understand community perspectives and preferences where there are several options available and the final decision is being shaped</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Active Participation</td>
<td>Generate ideas and solutions</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Work together with stakeholders collaboratively to facilitate shared responsibility and problem-solving</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Make decisions</td>
<td>Higher</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Some useful questions to consider:

- What outputs or outcomes does the City of Cockburn want to achieve by undertaking community engagement?
- What can change as a result of community engagement and what cannot change?
- Where can stakeholders provide valuable input throughout the decision making process? Which aspects can they influence?
- Who will be making the final decision? Can stakeholders be involved in the final decision-making?

If you plan to consult the community, or seek active participation, inform Elected Members. Include an announcement in the fortnightly Elected Member Bulletin or circulate an email.
The Community Engagement Model outlines suggested ways to engage stakeholders according to each of the engagement levels:

- Information
- Consultation
- Active Participation

When developing a Community Engagement Plan consider which approach to use for each stakeholder group at various stages throughout the project.

The level of engagement you select may change as the policy, project, event or issue progresses. Sometimes it will be important to be as open and inclusive as possible. At other times, it will be important to target engagement to hear from specific individuals or organisations, hard to reach groups, or to obtain a random and representative sample of the community.

Be mindful of the budget and resourcing implications when determining how you will engage.

**Step 5: Determine the methods of engagement**

The Community Engagement Framework suggests the following considerations for determining the methods of engagement:

- How do stakeholders wish to be engaged?
- What information do stakeholders need to participate meaningfully?
- Do stakeholders have the background knowledge needed to actively participate?
- Are there cultural protocols that need to be respected?
- Does information need to be provided in languages other than English or in other accessible formats, such as using large font?
- Will stakeholders with limited transport options be able to participate?
- Are there time constraints (such as family or work commitments) that will restrict participation?
- Are the venues chosen for engagement activities considered safe, accessible and neutral, with adequate signage and lighting?
- Will we hear from people who are less confident about speaking in public or from those who may feel intimidated or uncomfortable about expressing personal views in front of others?
- Does the community engagement plan utilise online communications and engagement techniques to compliment traditional techniques?
The three strategies – information, consultation and active participation – are not hierarchical, nor are they listed in any order of priority. One is not better or worse than the other. Within any community, there are contributors, spectators, selective listeners and those that are disconnected. As peoples’ willingness, capacity, availability and interest to engage changes, the City of Cockburn’s responsibility is providing stakeholders with the opportunity to interact and connect if and when they want.

**Disconnected**
Disengaged and disconnected from the City of Cockburn and local government in general; non-ratepayers; perceive little or no value in having a relationship with the City of Cockburn.

**Selective Listeners**
Mostly inattentive; attend to communications selectively; rarely engage in dialogue; heavily filter communications; perceive little value in investing in their relationship with the City of Cockburn.

**Spectators**
Bystanders; observers; watchful citizens; selectively engage on issues that directly impact their lives; ‘sub-mariners’ in that they often pop up in a crisis; civic-minded.

**Contributors**
Involved; empowered; value a two-way, reciprocal relationship with the City of Cockburn; expect engagement to result in influence; value contributing to better the City of Cockburn.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>LEVEL</th>
<th>ENGAGEMENT APPROACH</th>
<th>BENEFITS</th>
<th>LIMITATIONS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
|       | Personal communications (such as inserts with Council bills, personally addressed letters, telephone calls) | - builds relationships  
- potential to communicate in real time (telephone)  
- less potential for misunderstandings | - resource intensive  
- access to a complete and current database  
- no guarantee materials will be read and understood (applies for all print communication) |
|       | Mass distribution of communications (such as direct mail of fliers, email distribution lists) | can reach large audiences | - may be mistaken for junk mail  
- message may be diluted or ignored due to high competition for the audience’s attention |
|       | Targeted communications on specific policies, projects, events of issues (such as information fliers distributed to specific interest groups, hotlines) | - may heighten awareness on specific issues  
- targets information to specific audiences  
- promotes information sharing among interest groups | - only as good as the distribution network  
- difficult to access and maintain current email addresses or databases of specific interest groups  
- information may be filtered by a gatekeeper |
|       | Public information (such as kiosks, stalls, library displays, newspaper inserts, media stories) | can reach large audiences | - passive communication |
|       | Individual consultation (such as indepth interviews, public comment, and surveys – online, phone, in person and postal) | - provides opportunity for input from those unlikely to attend meetings  
- allows participants to express individual, often anonymous views without fear of retribution  
- with proper sample management, you can obtain statistically valid and representative results | - access to a complete and current database  
- lower response rates, especially if the questions don’t seem relevant or well written  
- if the questions are not understood, or responses are insufficient, you can’t prompt or probe for further information |
|       | Targeted group consultation (such as focus groups or workshops with targeted recruitment) | - opportunity to explore issues, attitudes and behaviour in great depth  
- can clarify uncertainties or misunderstandings | - recruitment can be time consuming  
- may exclude minority groups if quotas aren’t applied with recruitment |
|       | Public consultation (such as public meetings) | can heighten awareness on specific policies, plans, events or issues | - tendency to hear from the same people often  
- those who support new ideas and plans may feel intimidated to speak up in the face of strong, vocal opposition  
- quiet, shy people may not be heard |
|       | Engaging individuals (such as community champions and opinion leaders) | - indepth and shared understanding of issues  
- helps to build strong, long lasting relationships with stakeholders | - participants may not be seen as representative by wider community  
- labour intensive |
|       | Engaging groups (such as reference advisory groups) | - fosters small group communications  
- promotes joint problem solving | needs clear objectives |
There are many innovative engagement tools that you may be interested in learning about. Here are a few to consider:

**Charettes**
citizens are recruited to examine an issue in depth and make recommendations based on their evaluations.

**Online collaborative platforms**
such as IdeaScale - used to establish a virtual space for stakeholders to suggest, vote for, rank or comment on ideas.

**Photo voice**
incorporates photography into community engagement processes by asking stakeholders to represent their views by taking photographs, discussing them, developing narratives and sharing the outcomes with others. An example of how this tool has been used locally is the City of Rockingham’s Act-Belong-Commit PhotoVoice competition http://www.rockingham.wa.gov.au/Leisure-and-recreation/PhotoVoice/Home.aspx

**Bag packers**
direct engagement with shoppers at major retail centres whilst helping them pack their bags in the supermarket. This technique may be used in major retail centres to engage with hard to reach groups.

**Negotiation tables**
roundtable workshops used to specifically identify areas of consensus and disagreement on a specific issue.

**Pinterest**
an online pin-up board that allows stakeholders to share ideas and inspiration.

**Visual art techniques**
such as drawing, sculpting, modelling, graphic rendering and painting. Creative tools are increasingly being used to compliment traditional engagement methods to increase stakeholder involvement.

**Drama workshops**
stakeholders are invited to act out their interpretation of a future vision for their community, exploring and discussing issues that arise during the creative process.

**Citizens’ juries**
randomly recruited panel of up to 20 citizens meet for 3-5 days to examine a policy, project, event or issue. Jury deliberations involve hearing from experts and witnesses. On the final day, the jury present their findings.
### TIPS FOR ENGAGING WITH THE LOCAL COMMUNITY

#### Youth and children

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>The City acknowledges, when adults are making decisions that affect children, children have the right to say what they think should happen and have their opinions taken into account. Such is the assertion of Article 12 of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (1989).</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Engagement should be age appropriate and permission must be obtained from a responsible adult, as required.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Communications should be short, simple, clear, visual, colourful and fun. In most situations, the best way of engaging with children (ages 4-12) is through a parent. Parents filter and translate information about policies, plans, events and issues for their children.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To communicate directly with children and youth, use highly visual and colourful posters in shopping centres, schools and libraries using graphics, cartoons or well-known personalities, celebrities or sports players.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Use social media and SMS to communicate with youth.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Role-play, photography, visual arts, music, dance, song and storytelling can help to engage. Central to these strategies is the art of conversation. This art involves how we hand the floor to children and youth; don’t put words in their mouths; pose provocative questions or prompts; probe and clarify their views; and use projection techniques such as ‘What do you think …?’ or ‘Why do you want …?’ that explicitly put their views at the heart of the consultations.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Work with schools, youth centres or other places where you are likely to have a captured audience.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

#### Families

| Parents can find it easier to contribute feedback online because it is not always practical or possible to attend meetings with young children. |
| Avoid community engagement during school holidays. |
| The Regional Parents Group is perceived to be a great forum for finding out information and addressing issues. |
| Parents like the novelty and convenience of using an interactive community map to register their views on transport and traffic management (Cockburn Integrated Transport Strategy Collaborative Community Map). |

#### Seniors

| Seniors prefer more personalised communication, such as phone calls (to land lines) and face-to-face meetings. |
| Calls to mobile phones may be considered a nuisance or a sign of an emergency. |
| As seniors’ groups and clubs meet regularly, ask if it is appropriate to visit one of their regular meetings. |
| Place posters in seniors’ centres, libraries and medical centres. |

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## TIPS FOR ENGAGING WITH THE LOCAL COMMUNITY

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Indigenous</th>
<th>Helpful Contacts</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Word of mouth is an effective strategy to reach Indigenous people. Allow plenty of time for the word to get out.</td>
<td>Aboriginal Community Development Officer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Communications will be better received if they come from a familiar face or source. Contact the Aboriginal Community Development Officer for advice on the best point of contact and/or for contacts of existing groups.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pass information fliers to elders who in turn will pass information onto others.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Refer to the Aboriginal Reference Group for their input and advice.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Tap into the Aboriginal Liaison Officers in local schools and universities.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Consider access to transport (buses, carpooling, etc.) when planning events or gatherings.</td>
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<tr>
<td>If you or your team haven’t done Culture Awareness Training, approach the Aboriginal Community Development Officer for advice and support in developing your Community Engagement Plan.</td>
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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Culturally and Linguistically Diverse Communities</th>
<th>Manager, Human Services</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>May require information translated or made available in plain English.</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>It is important to build trusting and respectful relationships. Don’t over consult and avoid tokenistic consultation.</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>For top tips for engaging with CaLD communities, see “Implementing the Principles of Multiculturalism Locally: A Planning Guide for Western Australian local governments”2.</td>
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<tr>
<th>People with a disability or impairment</th>
<th>Disability Access and Inclusion Officer</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ensure venues, processes and written and audiovisual materials are accessible to the full range of people to be engaged.</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Don’t make assumptions about abilities or rely on stereotypes. Use inclusive and respectful language. If in doubt — ask!</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Consider ways to access people who do not acknowledge they have a disability, especially age-related disabilities and people with temporary disabilities caused by accidents.</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>For key strategies for engaging people with a disability, see “Engaging Queenslanders: A Guide to Engaging People with a Disability”3</td>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Residents’ Associations</th>
<th>Community Development Coordinator</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Following the use of street meetings in the recent federal election, residents’ associations would like more informal ‘meet and greet’ opportunities with local councillors. Unlike ward meetings, these meet and greet sessions would occur in local parks and street verges.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Provide regular updates on social media.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Consider the schedule of residents’ associations meetings in preparing a Community Engagement Plan. Most dates are available in advance in January for the calendar year. Associations tend to meet monthly or bi-monthly.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Don’t rely on postal mail getting through in a timely fashion. Those with PO Boxes may only check for mail once a fortnight.</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Specifically request that communications from Council be logged and placed on the association’s agenda for the next meeting so that the message gets through to members.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cockburn has an existing grant scheme for residents’ associations to print newsletters. Developing a newsletter template for a residents’ association if they don’t already have one might be a good way of promoting your engagement opportunity as well as promoting the association.</td>
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## TIPS FOR ENGAGING WITH THE LOCAL COMMUNITY

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<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Parents and Citizens’ Groups</strong></th>
<th><strong>Helpful Contacts</strong></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Acknowledge the different capacities of P&amp;C groups in primary schools compared to secondary schools, especially with regard to volunteers and manpower.</td>
<td>Community Development Coordinator</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>When communicating with parents and citizens groups ensure correspondence is addressed to the president and copied to the secretary so that the correspondence is officially logged and actioned. If a P&amp;C receive a generic mass mailout, it can often be filtered by the gatekeeper and discarded or deleted before it is distributed.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Use both school and private email addresses for P&amp;C personnel, because there is often restricted email access on school computers.</td>
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<tr>
<th><strong>Community Organisations</strong></th>
<th><strong>Helpful Contacts</strong></th>
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<tr>
<td>Consider ways to increase Council representation and involvement with local community groups. The monthly Neighbourhood Watch meetings, for example, are perceived to be effective because of the input of Ward Councillors. Neighbourhood Watch would like the City of Cockburn to help further their cause by facilitating e-newsletters and promoting Neighbourhood Watch via community stalls.</td>
<td>Community Development Coordinator</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Facebook is growing in popularity among community organisations because it makes it easy to share information among members.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Face-to-face meetings (with food) is often the preferred method for engagement, however many stakeholders feel that if the purpose is one-way information, then email is preferable; whereas if the City wants to consult, then public meetings are more appropriate.</td>
<td>Community Development Coordinator &amp; Manager, Human Services</td>
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<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Advisory Groups</strong></th>
<th><strong>Helpful Contacts</strong></th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Advisory Groups are most effective when they have clear objectives to provide structure to the meetings and purpose to the group.</td>
<td>Manager, Human Services</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Be watchful that the advisory group is perceived to be representative.</td>
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<tr>
<td>There is a view that a committee structure is more effective and influential in decision-making than reference and advisory groups due to the way meetings are minuted and reported.</td>
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<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Business</strong></th>
<th><strong>Helpful Contacts</strong></th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ensure correspondence is relevant, interesting and to-the-point.</td>
<td>Manager, Strategic Planning</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maintain an accurate and up to date business database for communications and networking purposes.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Provide a central reference point for business enquiries.</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Frequent visitors to the City’s website, such as real estate agents and property developers who are accessing TPS maps, often go directly to pages of interest. As they bypass the homepage, consider promoting engagement opportunities on multiple pages on the website.</td>
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City of Cockburn – Community Engagement Framework
Step 6: Determine when engagement will occur

In conjunction with the broader project plan, the timing of engagement needs to consider the lifecycle of the policy, plan, project, event or issue.

- At what points during the lifecycle of the policy, plan, project, event or issue will engagement occur?
- What are the timing issues, requirements or constraints?

Generally, there are three key times to engage with the community:

- during scoping or ideas generation
- during analysis (where options and alternatives are considered)
- during decision-making

Now is a good time to talk to the Community Development Officer about what other engagement plans may be happening at the same time as yours. Perhaps there may be opportunities to work together.

Some useful questions to consider:

- Are the timeframes realistic and reasonable?
- Has the timing clashed with school holidays, public holidays or other major events?
- Has the timing clashed with other City of Cockburn engagement processes?
- Has sufficient notification been provided to stakeholders?
- How will the engagement plan need to change over time as stakeholders enter or exit the process?
Case study: Three School Sites

Three former school sites in Coolbellup were redeveloped for residential housing and community use. The proposed structure plans were endorsed in 2011, incorporating community input from an Enquiry by Design Workshop in 2003.

A consultant was engaged to design and implement a community engagement program in order to gather local knowledge from the community about the three former primary school sites, inform the community of the proposal, and undertake public consultation. The methods used included stakeholder design workshops, community open days and community reference group meetings.

The issue that arises from this case study is not how the community was engaged but when. The project’s elongated timeframe meant that stakeholders entered and exited the community engagement program at different stages. The unintended consequences of the timeframe resulted in:

• Inhibited relationship building
• Disrupted information flows
• Difficulties for newcomers and new residents to engage and ‘catch-up’
• An over reliance on the local residents’ association as the key community contact which was not perceived as representative of the whole community. This exacerbated a feeling of being excluded from the engagement process.
• The feeling of exclusion bred mistrust and uncertainty about whether stakeholders’ voices were being heard.
Step 7: Resource the Plan

The Community Engagement Plan needs to identify who will be responsible for implementing and conducting community engagement and what resources (financial, human and technical) are available. The choice of engagement tool may have significant budgetary and resource implications.

Consider the following questions:

What is your budget?

Do you have sufficient funds to implement the Community Engagement Plan?

How can the Plan be revised to meet your budget constraints?

Who will be responsible for undertaking the community engagement?

Do they have capacity to complete this project within the timeframe?

Will you need to use external consultants?

What other resources are needed and available to support the Plan?
Step 8: Manage Risks

Consider the inherent risks of your Community Engagement Plan and develop strategies to mitigate and reduce these risks.

Use a Risk Matrix to help assess the level of risk.

Despite the best planning and preparation, situations can arise and they can escalate quickly. Early intervention is critical. Update your Community Engagement Plan as you go to keep it relevant and responsive.

If you’re concerned about anything, please don’t wait or feel like you need to act alone. The City of Cockburn has a team of specialists to offer support with community engagement. If you’d like assistance with identifying or managing risks, talk to your manager, consult the Community Development Officer or contact the Corporate Communications Team.
With Steps 1 to 8 completed, you’re ready to implement your Community Engagement Plan. Seek approval from your manager on the Plan and budget before proceeding.
Step 9: Provide feedback to stakeholders

Providing feedback to stakeholders is an important step in the Community Engagement Framework.

- How will stakeholder contributions be recognised, recorded and valued?
- What methods for follow up and feedback have been built in to the Community Engagement Plan?
- Are any mitigation strategies required to assist the community and stakeholders to embrace change or to address any residual dissatisfaction with the process?
The City of Cockburn’s Community Perceptions Survey and Business Perceptions Survey provide overall indicators of performance, including the way the City informs and consults the community. Every engagement activity contributes to these measures.

The purpose of reflecting upon the implementation of individual community engagement plans is to assist with continuous improvement. Your feedback about venues, facilitators, participant involvement and the Community Engagement Framework, for example, may be extremely helpful to others.

In the Plan, schedule a time to reflect and consider who you will seek feedback from.

Once the reflection has taken place, forward this information to the Community Development Coordinator. You may like to consider:

- What methods of engagement were used?
- What worked well?
- What was challenging?
- What feedback did you receive from people involved?
- What advice would you give to someone doing a similar project?
- Periodically, the Framework will be updated to incorporate the lessons being learned.

**Some areas you may like to reflect on:**

- Were key messages clearly presented and easily understood by the community?
- How many people were engaged? Was this sufficient for your purposes?
- Were the findings robust and reliable? Were they statistically significant?
- Were participants representative of the community?
- Did you hear from minority and hard to reach groups?
- Were there any unexpected barriers for participation?
- Was the venue suitable?
- Were you able to access the information and outcomes you needed?
**Case Study: Reviewing the Disability Access and Inclusion Plan**

**Step 1:**
Decide if community engagement is needed

The Disability Services Act 1993 (WA) requires that local government authorities have a Disability Access and Inclusion Plan that is reviewed every five years. The Plan outlines how people with a disability will have equal access to facilities, services, events, employment and consultation within the City of Cockburn. It is estimated that 19% of Cockburn residents have a disability. The community will be directly or indirectly impacted by this Plan, therefore, community engagement is required.

**Step 2:**
Assess the impacts

Internal stakeholders impacted by the Plan included Elected Members, the executive team, staff and the Disability Reference Group. External stakeholders affected by the Plan included people with a disability (and their carers/families), service providers and the general community. A total of 68 residents and 84 service providers engaged in the review process.

**Step 3:**
Address legislative requirements

The Disability Service Regulations 2004 set out minimum consultation requirements that include a call for submissions by notice in a newspaper circulation in the local government area or on its website.

**Step 4:**
Determine the objectives

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Inform</th>
<th>Consult</th>
<th>Active Participation</th>
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**Step 5:**
Determine the methods of engagement

Beyond the legislative requirements, the methods of engagement were determined with the input from the Disability Reference Group, staff and an external consultant. The key consideration in choosing how to engage was maximizing opportunity by overcoming barriers to participation. The key methods selected were:

- Advertisement in the local newspaper informing the community of the review and inviting input
- Article in Cockburn Soundings
- Notice of review posted on Cockburn’s website
- Online survey (Survey Monkey)
- Feedback booths at Cockburn Central and Phoenix Shopping Centre
- Personal contact by staff (telephone and email)
- Three public consultation meetings
- 120 posters
- Distribution list of 900 letters and 350 hard copies distributed by service providers
- Face to face meetings with people with disabilities, their families, carers and disability organisations
Step 6:
Determine when engagement will occur

The community engagement plan was scheduled as part of the work plan to complete the review and built into the consultants’ scope of work. The engagement occurred between February and July 2012.

Step 7:
Resource the Plan

A private consultant was appointed to work alongside the Disability Access Officer and progress was reported to the Disability Advisory Group.

Step 8:
Manage Risks

A community engagement Risk Management Plan was completed with the Consultant, focusing on mitigation strategies should things go wrong through the engagement process.

Step 9:
Provide feedback to stakeholders

The Plan was made available in full and in summary, and in multiple formats (Word, audio and Braille).

Step 10:
Reflect on the lessons learned

- Attendance at public meetings was poor so other methods had to be used to ensure a representative response.
- Staff engagement was difficult due to limited resources and time.
- Buy in and ownership was low at stages because stakeholders felt that they couldn’t influence the outcome.
- The experience demonstrated that high level organizational commitment is needed for community engagement to be successful. Engagement requires time and manpower.
- The take up of active participation was limited by people not acknowledging they had a disability (especially age-related disabilities and people with temporary disabilities caused by accidents).
- The process of community engagement needs to be clearly explained and followed, with the sphere of influence explained up front.
- It is challenging to access hard to reach communities, even when using culturally appropriate methods.
- The need to achieve a balance of views between people with a disability and service providers will require ongoing management.
Hypothetical case: Sporting Ground Closure

During roundtable workshops, internal and external stakeholders were asked to design an appropriate community engagement plan for a hypothetical situation.

**Step 1:**
Decide if community engagement is needed

Access to a popular sporting and recreational playing field will be restricted for up to 12 months. This will impact the community, therefore, engagement is required.

**Step 2:**
Assess the impacts

Sporting clubs and associations, dog walkers, neighbouring residents and recreational users will be affected due to restricted access.

**Step 3:**
Address legislative requirements

The City’s Community Engagement Policy and Disability Access & Inclusion Plan have been reviewed when preparing this Plan.

**Step 4:**
Determine the objectives

- Inform ✓
- Consult ✓
- Active Participation ✓

The main purpose of the community engagement plan is to inform stakeholders that the playing fields will be inaccessible to the public, when the restriction period applies and why the playing fields will be out of action. Most felt that comprehensive information was the best way of avoiding the issue escalating. Consultation with some stakeholder groups will be required to discuss alternative playing fields.

**Step 5:**
Determine the methods of engagement

The engagement methods will vary by stakeholder group based on who will be impacted by the change the most. Sporting club officials expect a courtesy phone call, as well as written notification (letter or email) for tabling at meetings.

Users expect signs to be posted at the playing fields displaying information about why access is restricted and for how long. The signs should contain contact information of the relevant City of Cockburn staff member.

Neighbours closest to the playing field would ideally like written notification via a flier.

While there may be users outside of the immediate vicinity of the playing fields that may be interested in the temporary closure of the playing fields, most stakeholders suggested that an item in the Cockburn Soundings or the Cockburn Gazette would suffice.
### Step 6:
**Determine when engagement will occur**

As sporting clubs depend on access to playing fields, 3-6 months advanced notice would be required so alternative arrangements could be negotiated. This will be dependent on the time of year/sporting season.

### Step 7:
**Resource the Plan**

A budget for signage, the preparation of media releases and one on one consultation with stakeholders will be required.

### Step 8:
**Manage Risks**

The following risks need to be managed:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Risk</th>
<th>Mitigation Strategy</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Failing to inform everyone who will be affected.</td>
<td>Take steps to ensure the user contact database is up to date, erect on-site signage, and make public announcements via City communications and the local newspaper.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sporting clubs and associations not informing their members about the closures or providing sufficient explanations about why the closures are happening.</td>
<td>Provide sporting clubs and associations with a suggested approach for communicating with members, recommended wording to use, and a link to the City’s website for further information and updates.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not offering sporting clubs and associations appropriate alternatives.</td>
<td>Hold one-to-one discussions with affected stakeholders to understand their needs and discuss appropriate alternatives.</td>
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### Step 9:
**Provide feedback to stakeholders**

Feedback to stakeholders is critical, especially if there are unexpected delays related to project completion. As 12 months is a long time, updating stakeholders quarterly was considered appropriate. Selling stakeholders on the benefits of what they might gain from the closure (better sporting grounds) might help.

### Step 10:
**Reflect on the lessons learned**

The main considerations related to timing and convenience. Could the project have been completed in a way which causes less disruption to users?