



COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT STRATEGY 2018



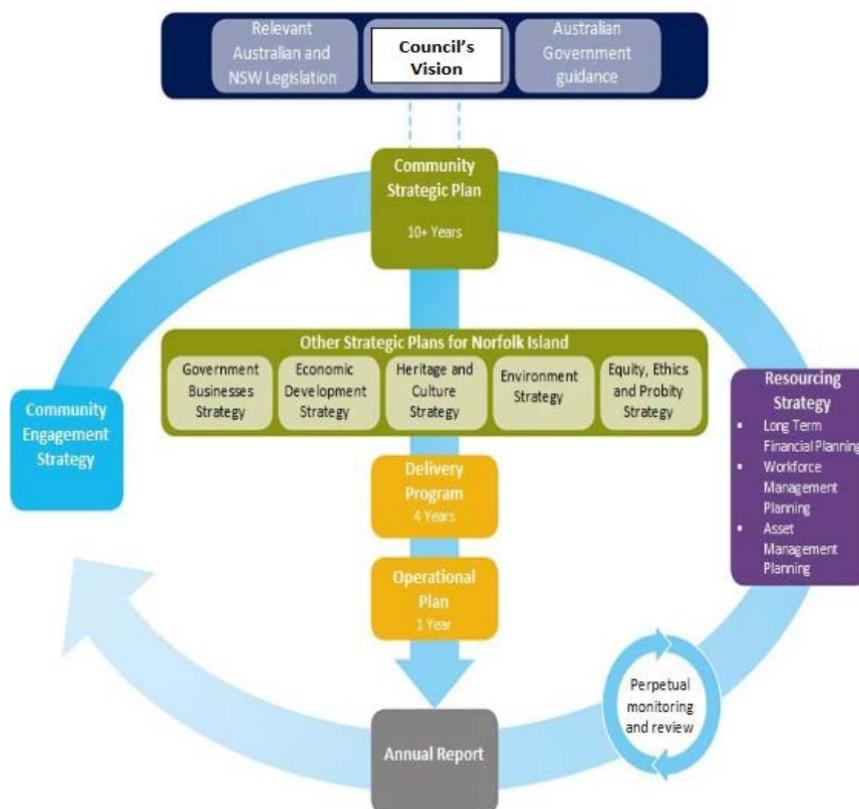
Adopted at the 21 February 2018 Council Meeting, Resolution 2018/8.

Introduction

Norfolk Island Regional Council is required to plan and report in line with the *Local Government Act 1993 (NSW) (NI)* Integrated Planning and Reporting Framework. Community engagement underpins this framework.

'The Integrated Planning and Reporting framework recognises that most communities share similar aspirations: a safe, healthy and pleasant place to live, a sustainable environment, opportunities for social interaction, opportunities for education and employment, and reliable infrastructure. The difference lies in how each community responds to these needs. It also recognises that Council plans and policies should not exist in isolation - that they are inter-connected. This framework allows councils to draw their various plans together, understand how they interact and get the maximum leverage from their efforts by planning holistically and sustainably for the future.'

The Integrated Planning and Reporting framework is depicted as follows:



The Norfolk Island Community Strategic Plan states that Norfolk Island Regional Council's mission is to provide local civic leadership and governance through good decision making, accountability and transparency. Council will protect and enhance Norfolk's unique culture, heritage, traditions and environment; promote a healthy and sustainable lifestyle; look after our community assets; and foster a prosperous economy.

Norfolk Island Regional Council's strategic objectives are to achieve an environmentally sustainable community; a proud, diverse and inclusive community; a caring community; a successful and innovative community; an informed and accountable community; and a healthy and safe community.

In fulfilling its mission and working to meet its objectives, Council has committed to engaging the community through informing, consulting, involving, collaborating and empowering the community and embracing the values of integrity, communication, accountability, respect, and excellence.

Purpose

A Community Engagement Strategy outlines standards and principles to guide the process, ensuring Council undertakes inclusive and comprehensive engagement programs. Community engagement, or public participation, is defined by the International Association of Public Participation (IAP2) as any process that involves the public in problem solving or decision making and uses public input to make better decisions. A Community Engagement Strategy can also work to facilitate a positive engagement culture within Council and bring together the Council and community in working towards shared strategic objectives.

Objective

To set out the way the Norfolk Island Regional Council will engage with the community in planning and strategic decision making.

Council's Community Promise

The Norfolk Island Regional Council promises to engage with the community in an open, transparent and equitable way to make sure it understands the views and feelings of all community segments before it makes planning, funding or strategic decisions.

How we will involve the community

We will engage with the community in decision making through open and transparent consultation, respecting the privacy of contributors and providing options for confidentiality. We will consult the community in different ways depending on the issue we are considering. Some of the ways we will consult the community are:

- Open public meetings hosted by the Mayor and Councillors;
- Discussion papers and questionnaires;
- Community surveys;
- Small focus group meetings;
- Public and private hearings; and
- Five minute public speaking slots can be available at the start of each Council meeting.

Before we decide how to consult the community we will think about:

- The goal of the activity, project, service, decision, or plan we are consulting on;
- How much the activity, project, service, decision, or plan we are considering would affect the community;
- How complex the issues we are consulting on are (very complex issues will need different consultation to small simple issues);
- Who we need to consult to make sure we are aware of the full range of views across the community including students and young people, the elderly, people from diverse cultural and social backgrounds, differently abled people, businesses, and community groups.
- The risks and rewards of consulting or not consulting on the particular issue; and
- The expectations of the community with respect to consultation on the particular matter being considered.

Our Engagement process

The International Association for Public Participation (IAP2) has established a framework setting out how communities can be engaged in the planning and decision making process. The IAP2 model sets out how the Regional Council should seek to inform, consult, involve, collaborate with and empower the community in its decision making processes. The process outlined in Table 1 - 'Our Community Engagement Strategy' - explains how we plan to do these things on Norfolk Island.

Further, this strategy also includes information and guidance on consultation specifically about legislation changes. This section includes the Australian Government Legislative Consultation Framework for Norfolk Island and Norfolk Island Regional Council's Legislation Consultation Framework for Council's consultation with the community about suggested amendments to legislation.

Our Community Engagement Strategy

Our Objective:	What it means:	What we will do:	How we will do it:
Inform the Community	Providing the public with balanced and objective information to help them understand a problem, alternatives, opportunities and/or solutions.	We will make sure the community is informed about the operations of the Regional Council including plans, policies, decisions and other things.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Public Notices • Media Releases • Community Newsletters • Articles in local media • Online through our website, social media and email distribution lists • Direct mailing
Consult the Community	Actively seeking the thoughts and contributions of the community to decision making and planning processes	We will consult the community before making major decisions and before we create or amend plans.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Open community meetings hosted by the Mayor and Councillors with opportunities for presentations from members of the public • Surveys and questionnaires • Discussion papers • Focus groups • Forums and workshops • Online/telephone consultation
Involve the Community	Working directly with the public throughout the process to ensure that public concerns and aspirations are consistently understood and considered.	We will involve the community in our discussions and decision making	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Active consultation • Inclusion of community members with specialist expertise, knowledge, or skills in committee processes • Open and transparent decision making • Testing new ideas by seeking comments and contributions to plans and policies

Our Objective:	What it means:	What we will do:	How we will do it:
Collaborate with the Community	Partnering with the public in each aspect of the decision including the development of alternatives and the identification of the preferred solution.	We will work together with the community to formulate solutions and incorporate advice and recommendations into the decisions to the maximum extent possible.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Open community meetings hosted by the Mayor and Councillors with opportunities for presentations from members of the public • Surveys and questionnaires • Discussion papers • Focus groups • Forums and workshops • Online consultation
Empower the Community	Placing final decision making in the hands of the public.	We will ensure the collective position of the community is an integral part of our decision making processes.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Broad consultation to understand all of the different views present in the community • Explanation of why or why not views presented are reflected in final policy, plans or decisions

Adapted from the IAP2 Public Participation Spectrum

Community engagement about legislation

Federal Legislation in Norfolk Island

The *Norfolk Island Act 1979 (Cth)* and sub-ordinate regulations still apply to Norfolk Island. Significant changes were made to the Norfolk Island Act in 2015, these changes came in effect through the *Norfolk Island Legislation Amendment Act 2015 (Cth)*. In addition, the Federal Minister can make Ordinances and Instruments for Norfolk Island. These are available at <https://www.legislation.gov.au/Search/Norfolk%20Island>. The *Norfolk Island Act 1979 (Cth)* states that unless otherwise specified Federal legislation extends to Norfolk Island.

From 1 July 2016 Commonwealth taxation, social security, immigration, biosecurity, customs and health arrangements, including Medicare and the Pharmaceutical Benefits Scheme, were extended to Norfolk Island.

NSW Legislation in Norfolk Island (applied law)

The *Norfolk Island Applied Laws Ordinance 2016 (Cth)* states that from 1 July 2018 the laws of New South Wales will form part of the law of the external territory of Norfolk Island as applied laws. This Ordinance also allows the Federal Minister to repeal or make changes to any New South Wales legislation before or after it is applied to Norfolk Island.

A Legislation Consultation Framework for Norfolk Island has been developed by the Commonwealth that together with the Australian Government's Best Practice Consultation Guidance Note, guides the Australian Government's consultation on legislative changes, including amendments to existing laws and the application of or creation of new laws. See Table 2 – Australian Government's Legislation Consultation Framework.

Norfolk Island issued Legislation

The previous Norfolk Island Government (1979 – 2015) was able to set laws for Norfolk Island. A number of these laws continue to remain in force due to the *Norfolk Island Continued Laws Ordinance 2015 (Cth)*. The Commonwealth are undergoing a process of consolidating this legislation which is available at <https://www.legislation.gov.au/Search/NI>

The Norfolk Island Regional Council may identify and suggest amendments to Norfolk Island legislation. To guide the community engagement on such amendments the Norfolk Island Regional Council has also prepared a Legislation Consultation Framework at Table 3 to be followed when it is considering making suggestions to the Australia Government about legislative changes (or undertaking legislative activity within its jurisdiction).

Table 2 - Australian Government’s Legislation Consultation Framework

** This framework will guide the Australian Government’s consultation on legislative changes, including amendments to existing laws and the application or creation of new laws. **

LEGISLATIVE EFFECT ON COMMUNITY								
Criteria	Broad Effect		Limited Effect		Minimal Effect		No Effect	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ The proposed legislation may have a widespread effect on the Norfolk Island economy. ➤ The proposed legislation may affect a large number of businesses, organisations or individuals. ➤ The administrative and compliance costs of the proposed legislation may be high or onerous. ➤ There may be strong views on the proposed legislation among stakeholders or the public. ➤ The issue may be sensitive or may generate significant public debate. 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ The proposed legislation would have a limited effect on the Norfolk Island economy. ➤ The proposed changes would affect a limited number of businesses, community organisations and individuals. ➤ The administrative and compliance costs of the proposed legislation would not be onerous. ➤ There are unlikely to be strong views on the proposed legislation among stakeholders or the public. ➤ The issue is uncontroversial and unlikely to generate significant public debate. ➤ The proposed legislation would affect the functions of the local government. 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ The proposed legislation would have minimal effect on businesses, community organisations and individuals. 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ The proposed legislation would only affect state or Commonwealth agencies or employees. 	
								
COMMUNITY CONSULTATION								
Mechanism	Action Required	Lead	Action Required	Lead	Action Required	Lead	Action Required	Lead
Notification and release of relevant documents on government website	Yes	Department of Infrastructure and Regional Development	Yes	Department of Infrastructure and Regional Development	Yes	Department of Infrastructure and Regional Development	Yes	Department of Infrastructure and Regional Development
Information in the form of fact sheets; newspaper articles; radio announcements	Yes	Administrator	Yes	Administrator	Yes	Administrator	No	
Targeted meetings	Yes	Department of Infrastructure and Regional Development with technical expertise as required	Yes	Department of Infrastructure and Regional Development with technical expertise as required	No		No	
Call for written submissions	Yes	Department of Infrastructure and Regional Development	Yes	Department of Infrastructure and Regional Development	No		No	

Table 3 - Norfolk Island Regional Council's Legislation Consultation Framework

This Framework will guide NIRC consultation on Australian Government proposed or Council suggested amendments to legislation affecting Norfolk Island. Noting that Council cannot make changes to legislation and will prepare a recommendation to the Australian Government Minister.

LEGISLATIVE EFFECT ON COMMUNITY				
	Broad Effect	Limited Effect	Minimal Effect	No Effect
Criteria	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ The proposed/suggested amendment to legislation may have a widespread effect on the Norfolk Island economy. ➤ The proposed/suggested amendment to legislation may affect a large number of businesses, organisations or individuals. ➤ The administrative and compliance costs of the proposed/suggested amendment to legislation may be high or onerous. ➤ There may be strong views on the proposed/suggested amendment to legislation among stakeholders or the public. ➤ The issue may be sensitive or may generate significant public debate. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ The proposed/suggested amendment to legislation would have a limited effect on the Norfolk Island economy. ➤ The proposed/suggested amendment to changes would affect a limited number of businesses, community organisations and individuals. ➤ The administrative and compliance costs of the proposed/suggested amendment to legislation would not be onerous. ➤ There are unlikely to be strong views on the change among stakeholders or the public. ➤ The issue is uncontroversial and unlikely to generate significant public debate. ➤ The change would affect the functions of the local government. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ The proposed/suggested amendment to legislation would have minimal effect on businesses, community organisations and individuals. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ The proposed/suggested amendment to legislation would only affect Council or employees.
COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT				
Mechanism	Action Required	Action Required	Action Required	Action Required
Notification and release of relevant documents on Council website	Yes	Yes	Yes	No
Information in the form of fact sheets; media releases; radio announcements	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Targeted meetings	Yes	Yes	No	No
Call for written submissions	Yes	Yes	No	No

Checklist for effective engagement

The following checklist has been adapted from the NSW Government Regional Communities Consultative Council's *A summary guide to consulting with rural and regional communities*.

Identify the issue	<ul style="list-style-type: none">» What is the nature of the issue? If the issue is legislative in nature, refer to the Legislation Consultation Framework contained in this document.» What needs to be discussed?» What are the possible options or contentious issues?
Identify the objective of the engagement activity	<ul style="list-style-type: none">» What are you aiming to achieve?» Why are you talking to the community?» What information do you need to find out?
Identify who you need to talk to	<ul style="list-style-type: none">» Who is affected by the issue?» Can target groups be identified?» What are the particular needs of different groups?» What particular activities should be included to ensure that all relevant stakeholders are able to be included (e.g. community elders, older people, community based experts, young people, families, new residents and people with disabilities)?
What techniques will be needed	<ul style="list-style-type: none">» Are the techniques appropriate for the audience?» What other methods could be used to reach the target audience?
Allocate sufficient resources to the process	<ul style="list-style-type: none">» Would a neutral facilitator assist?» Is consensus decision making a goal?» Has sufficient time been allocated to the engagement activity?
Involve participants in the process	<ul style="list-style-type: none">» Has sufficient information been provided to participants to enable informed participation?» Is written information concise and jargon free?» Are there appropriate aids to assist communication (e.g. PowerPoint presentations and handouts), are special interests respected, and is the process understood?

Maximise the ability of the community to participate	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> » What are the most appropriate methods to contact participants? In some cases this might be via telephone » Is the location appropriate for the participants (not just the Council)? » Has adequate notice been given? » Have participants been encouraged to participate through personal contact? » Have cultural protocols been observed (eg: Statement of Respect)? » Can the expenses of low income participants be met? » Is a meeting the best way to achieve the desired outcome?
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Realistic timetables	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Is the community engagement activity a one-off or ongoing? » Is the timetable practical and realistic? » What are the time barriers and what strategies are in place if they cannot be met to the community's satisfaction?
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Resource management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> » What resources are needed? » Is training or are external personnel needed? » Are existing community resources being used? » Can this engagement activity or meeting be undertaken within an existing community meeting process?
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Outcomes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Are the desired outcomes clear to everyone? » Are the outcomes agreed? » How will the outcomes be documented? » How will the information be used? » How will decisions be reached? » How will the community be informed of the outcomes?
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Evaluation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> » How will success be defined and measured? » How can the community participate in the evaluation process? » How is the evaluation recorded? » How are the results of the evaluation provided back to the community participants and wider community?

Office of Local Government, 2016
Councillor Handbook pp 97-98