

Community Engagement Outcomes Report



Outcomes For: Draft Community Engagement Framework and Policy

01/03/2023

NORTH BURNETT REGIONAL COUNCIL

Report Prepared By	Executive Sponsor	Portfolio/Divisional Councillor/s
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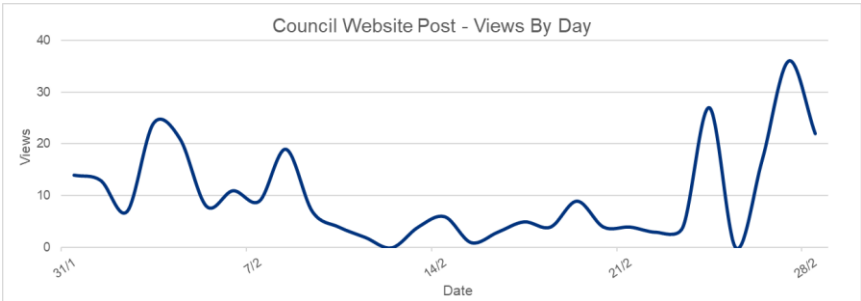
Corporate Plan Link	<p>1. Essential Service Delivery – Getting the Basics Right</p> <p>1.4 Support the delivery of essential services</p> <p>1.4.1 Robust governance, processes and support to ensure the effective delivery of essential services</p>
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CONTEXT

BACKGROUND

PROJECT BACKGROUND	<p>Council is committed to inclusive, transparent and value adding community engagement activities and outcomes. To reaffirm this commitment, Council has developed a draft community engagement framework and policy and has sought public feedback on the documents.</p> <p>The developed framework details Council's aspirations to proactively engage the community, where engagement will likely be value adding, while also ensuring a level of consistency when deciding to engage and conducting engagement activities. In developing the framework, Council considered industry best practice, with much of the framework underpinned by the International Association for Public Participation (IAP2) Community Engagement Model and the IAP2 Public Participation Spectrum.</p> <p>Following Council's preliminary endorsement, the draft framework document and policy were advertised for public exhibition and community feedback was invited between 4:30PM 31/01/2023 and 5PM 28/02/2023 (AEST) (the closing date).</p> <p>The feedback received through engagement has informed amendments to the draft framework and policy, further enhancing this important suite of documents. Council officers will seek endorsement of the amended documents at the March 2023 General Meeting (or a subsequent meeting if necessary) and, if deemed acceptable, the documents will be brought into effect.</p>
ENGAGEMENT BACKGROUND	<p>The objective of engagement was to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure that the developed framework and policy documents met community expectations while working within the parameters of engagement best practice. • Capture qualitative feedback from community members around possible amendments that could be made to the documents. • Provide a channel to capture any significant community objection to, or support for, the draft documents. <p>Given the objectives broadly target community members, and the developed drafts are quite extensive, a public exhibition period was deemed the most appropriate method of engagement. This style of engagement placed the documents in the public domain, enabling any interested parties to review the documents and provide feedback if they felt compelled to do so.</p> <p>Public communications were released on Council's website on 31/01/2023 and remained available as a feature post for the duration of the engagement, being ~4:30PM 31/01/2023 - 5PM 28/02/2023 (AEST) (the engagement period). These communications provided a basic background on why the framework was developed, factors considered during development, instruction on how to provide feedback and how to seek assistance if necessary. The post contained links to both draft documents, as well as an electronic feedback form, and was the primary channel to access these elements throughout the engagement period.</p> <p>During the engagement period, two social media posts were released via Council's Facebook page, directing interested parties to the website post. These posts were released on 03/02/2023 and 18/02/2023 and gave a high level overview of the website communications. Both posts included a 'call to action,' requesting the documents be viewed and any feedback is provided before the closing date.</p> <p>Other various channels were used throughout the engagement period including the Mayors weekly update, which is circulated in local print media, Council's website and Council notice boards. This ensured maximum reach and covered non digital media channels.</p>

PARTICIPATION

Engagement Activity	Participation/Reach	Evaluation																						
Social Media Post 1 – 03/02/2023	<p>Total Reach: 2497* Total Impressions: 3130*</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reach typically relates to the number of users that were presented the post. Impressions typically relates to the number of times the post was shown on any user's screen. <p><small>*Per Facebook statistics and subject to their own calculation methodology and statistical assumptions (if any).</small></p>	Post's reach was good and was released at an optimal time to maximise engagement. At the time of writing, this post has 7 comments, 4 likes and 6 shares.																						
Social Media Post 2 – 17/02/2023	<p>Total Reach: 308* Total Impressions: 321*</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reach typically relates to the number of users that were presented the post. Impressions typically relates to the number of times the post was shown on any user's screen. <p><small>*Per Facebook statistics and subject to their own calculation methodology and statistical assumptions (if any).</small></p>	Given this post was a reminder, the reach was reasonable. As the content was similar to the first (including the image) the content may not have been as attractive to the social media algorithms. At the time of writing, this post has 3 shares.																						
Council Website Post	<p>Total Website Post Views: 288</p>  <p><small>NOTE: All data is per google analytics and is subject to their own calculation methodology and statistical assumptions (if any). Data refers to views and may include multiple views by the same user.</small></p>	Website post traffic was reasonable with 30% appearing to have been referred to the page through a social media post and the remaining 70% either originating via general website visits, the Mayors weekly update or residual print media.																						
Feedback Form	<table border="1" style="width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse;"> <thead> <tr> <th colspan="2" style="text-align: left;">Responses by township (if provided)</th> </tr> <tr> <th style="text-align: left;">Township</th> <th style="text-align: right;">Total</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>Biggenden</td> <td style="text-align: right;">1</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Gayndah</td> <td style="text-align: right;">0</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Mundubbera</td> <td style="text-align: right;">0</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Eidsvold</td> <td style="text-align: right;">0</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Monto</td> <td style="text-align: right;">0</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Mt Perry</td> <td style="text-align: right;">2</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Other</td> <td style="text-align: right;">1</td> </tr> <tr> <td>I do not reside in the North Burnett Region</td> <td style="text-align: right;">0</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Total</td> <td style="text-align: right;">4</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	Responses by township (if provided)		Township	Total	Biggenden	1	Gayndah	0	Mundubbera	0	Eidsvold	0	Monto	0	Mt Perry	2	Other	1	I do not reside in the North Burnett Region	0	Total	4	Survey had little submissions. Given engagement was geared towards feedback by exception/objection, this can still be considered reasonably successful when considering the reach of other engagement activities.
Responses by township (if provided)																								
Township	Total																							
Biggenden	1																							
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GENERAL FINDINGS

While submission numbers were low, the quality of submissions was high with two submitters providing very specific feedback and others speaking more generally. Each submission provided a unique perspective on the draft documents with some generalised views shared between submitters.

Some key points raised through feedback included:

- Simplification of some sections of the policy to improve readability.
- Explicit reference to Council Officers conduct during engagement.
- Enhancements to the “Inclusive” principle within the framework document intended to improve the reach of communications regarding engagement.
- Adjustments to some suggested engagement activities to include more non-digital methods of communications.
- Commencement of a half yearly newsletter with council updates (out of scope but noted).
- Enhancements to councillor – community relations and informal engagement (out of scope but noted).

Furthermore, the communications released throughout the engagement exercise had a reasonably healthy reach. A lack of submissions from this pool suggests a general acceptance of the policy and framework amongst the broader community.

FEEDBACK

Q1: Do you have any thoughts or feedback to share on the Draft Community Engagement and Consultation Policy?

SUMMARY	Participants were asked to provide feedback on the draft community engagement and consultation policy, making reference to any specific sections/pages where appropriate.
SENTIMENT	<div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px;"> <p>Sample of Comments</p> <p>The Policy is clear and includes the fact that it “guides elected members”. (Scope 3) Instances where community engagement is not possible is clear and understandable. p.2, point 14</p> <p>Bul****t</p> <p>l[t] will work if council actually does listen to residents concerns.</p> <p>Policy Objectives, 5 & 6.</p> <p>Objectives is plural noun and in this example a common noun. These sentences are not concise and could be revised for clarity to read:</p> <p>5) Outline responsibilities and expectations of council and community for community engagement, including the likely activities to occur.</p> <p>6) Encourage community engagement that leverages community' skills and experiences to enhance decision-making, noting that elected members have final decision-making authority in Council.</p> <p>An objective should be clear because as it provides direction and focus for efforts and decision-making. When an objective is clear, it's easier for individuals and teams to understand what is expected of them and to work towards a common goal. A clear objective also helps to ensure that resources are used effectively and that progress can be measured and tracked. In summary, having a clear objective helps to increase accountability.</p> <p>Principles 8b) This reinforces my above point, does NBRC have a communication policy should you reference here? I'd like to make sure that's inclusive? You could rewrite b) in Plain English showing your commitment to this style.</p> <p>I have conducted Flesch Kincaid readability test on, this statement: Information provided through engagement activities is transparent, honest and provides a relevant overview of the proposal/matter as well as potential outcomes. Every attempt should be made to avoid overwhelming participants, with extraneous material kept to a minimum. Information provided should be aligned with the intended audience, exclude technical jargon where possible and be in 'Plain English.'</p> <p>The score is below: Flesh-Kincaid Grade Level: 13.6 Flesch Reading Ease Score: 23.1 Reading Level: College graduate (Very difficult to read) Average Words per Sentence: 14.3 Average Syllables per Word: 2 Sentences: 4 Words: 57 This is the lowest score you can achieve on this scale.</p> <p>A sentence like this would be more helpful: The information shared should be clear, truthful, and give an understanding of the proposal/issue, including what could happen as a result. We shouldn't make things confusing and only include what's necessary.</p> <p>Question: When you talk about Plain English like this, what resources and measurements do you have to ensure this being adhered too?</p> <p>Roles and Responsibilities Item 19 If item 19 is included, it is imperative to also mention the conduct expectations for staff, it reads very us and them as is.</p> </div>

<p>CHALLENGES/ PAIN POINTS</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Amendments could be made to enhance the readability of the policy objectives and the “Informative” principle. • Council Officer conduct should be noted in the roles and responsibilities section of the policy.
<p>SUGGESTIONS</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review objectives giving regard to readability while also retaining the existing context. • Review the “Informative” principle giving regard to the Flesch Kincaid readability test results while also retaining the context of the principle. • Include an explicit reference to Council Officers conduct, referring to the employee code of conduct.
<p>CHANGES INCORPORATED BECAUSE OF ENGAGEMENT</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Objectives have been amended with improvements made to the readability while also retaining the context of the objectives. • “Informative” principle has been amended with improvements made to the Flesch Kincaid readability test results while also retaining the context of the principle. • Council Officer conduct is now noted within the roles and responsibilities, making reference to the employee code of conduct.

FEEDBACK

Q2: Do you have any thoughts or feedback to share on the Draft Community Engagement Framework document?

SUMMARY	Participants were asked to provide feedback on the draft community engagement framework document, making reference to any specific sections/pages where appropriate.
SENTIMENT	<p>Sample of Comments</p> <p>Out of a population of 10,000 people, 1000 being in Biggenden, I would be surprised if 10 locals even know about this document and the survey, let alone have read it and would be prepared to fill out the survey.</p> <p>How does Council tell people about the survey and how do people find out there is a survey?</p> <p>p.5 Informative If you want to know what people think, DO NOT RELY on the internet.</p> <p>2. What about putting the Question on our Park noticeboards and other town noticeboards, "HAVE YOU DONE THE COUNCIL SURVEY ABOUT ENGAGEMENT?" Then have hard copies at the Council or help people do it online at Council computers.</p> <p>3. Repeat on Social Media this statement, "HAVE YOU DONE THE COUNCIL SURVEY ABOUT ENGAGEMENT?" and provide the link to the documents.</p> <p>4. Best way to engage a few more people is to include surveys with the Rates Notice. A simple question about engagement would be easy for many people to answer. Reading a 13 page document will turn people off.</p> <p>5. The face of Council is the elected member. This person is Council, speaks for Council and represents the people's voice. They have been elected and are paid to work for the people according to Council directives. Therefore, the elected councillor needs to be seen, often and at key events. The elected councillor needs to be available, to have time to listen to his/her constituents, to value their concerns, note them, and communicate a response. The Councillor does not have to solve issues, just report them, and then get back to the constituent with a reply. This relationship is the essence of Council engagement. Over the past years since elected, our local councillor has not answered one email, returned one phone call or attended one meeting invited to, and only a few times sent an apology. This is not engagement!</p> <p>p. 10 Consultation options This provides lots of options to find out information, but most of it involves lots of extra administrative hours and would be costly. The 13 page document is too wordy and must have been very expensive to write up, get checked and then finalise. Simplicity is key!</p> <p>If the local elected paid Councillor walked the streets, made time for people and attended events that would be one easy way to engage people. That person needs to be an excellent listener and communicator, able to empathise and show understanding. To be listened to and understood is the first step of trust.</p> <p>p.5 Inclusive If Council is trying to communicate with a broad section of the community, the internet is not suitable. Internet communication will always exclude most of the population. The best way to get a cross section of the community is to email not for profit groups who can then discuss Council questions at their monthly meetings. Most towns should have an up to date directory of non for profits, as we do in Biggenden, with 52 clubs/organisations listed. If Council is trying to communicate with a specific group, e.g. health care, schools or business, the internet is the best form of communication. Our Biggenden community directory lists 51 businesses. If these two avenues were used, in one month you could gain 103 responses. However, as everyone is so time poor, a 13 page document will not be read, so reduce the engagement question to something simple. e.g. Council wants to speak to you and hear your ideas. What is the best way to discuss important matters?</p> <p>Waste of money actually do something productive in town</p>

<p>CHALLENGES/ PAIN POINTS</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Electronic communication methods may not always be the best method to get information across to the broader community. • Continued reminders may be necessary throughout engagement to maintain momentum and reach the greatest audience. • Greater informal Councillor - Community interaction is needed beyond the documented engagement framework and policy. • Community groups could also be contacted to share communications or engagement opportunities with their members.
<p>SUGGESTIONS</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Include notes around diversification of engagement methods including community notice boards and the use of community groups as catalysts where possible. • Councillor – Community relations could be improved to enable simpler engagement outside of formal engagement (Out of scope). • Consider adding additional engagement methods to the developed community engagement matrix to capture additional “non-digital” engagement methods.
<p>CHANGES INCORPORATED BECAUSE OF ENGAGEMENT</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Additional notes have been included in the “Inclusive” principle to ensure further consideration is given to “non-digital” methods of communication when planning engagement exercises and advertising engagement opportunities. • Additional notes have been added to the “Inclusive” principle to ensure consideration is given to regular reminders throughout engagement activities, maximising reach and engagement participation. • Additional “non-digital” engagement methods have been included on the developed community engagement matrix, providing further prompts when selecting engagement activities.

FEEDBACK

Q3: Do you have any other general comments you would like to add?

SUMMARY

Participants were asked if there were any other general comments they wanted to add.

SENTIMENT

Sample of Comments

I have three good experiences of Council engagement, and the points of success were the same in each.

Establishing the Emergency Service Cadets ten years ago involved regular conversations with the Councillor and emergency services, participation by the councillor in all planning meetings, attendance by the Councillor at training nights and special events, and lots of encouragement by the Councillor.

2. Biggenden Wall of Fame & Pioneer Walk (\$50,000 Drought Recovery Grant Project) involved face to face conversations with Council's community development officer who answered all emails, attended all meetings, and was full of encouragement and assistance. It also involved Parks & Gardens staff who physically came to the park to discuss construction, pathways and placement of signs.

3. Foodworks COMMUNITY NOTICE BOARD In view of floods in Dallarnil area, I asked if a Council noticeboard could be put up outside every supermarket in our towns to convey emergency information.

The purpose of the noticeboard would be for Council notices, emergency information, road closures, water problems, fire or health issues, evacuation centres.

In Biggenden the Council is too far away from the supermarket, the cost of a noticeboard was prohibitive and staff could not be paid to walk down to put up notices up anyway.

So I approached Foodworks manager, who paid for the Community Noticeboard, and now all Council notices are put in a central location.

The main point of this was that emails to Council were answered and verbal approval given for erection of the noticeboard and permission to print out Council social media messages was also given.

These examples are Council engagement at its best, where trust is built through personal relationships, and clear communication, all parties are satisfied and the outcomes met.

Happy to discuss any of this.

Leaving mount perry to die council isn't helpful doesn't care and the people of Mt perry have had enough

I would like to see a council news/ information leaflet again as we used to get even if its half yearly with any major changes re works, rate increases etc. to let us know what's happening and hopefully the reason.

thank you

SUGGESTIONS

- Greater consideration should be given to informal engagement activities.
- Council could introduce a half yearly leaflet providing general council updates and news.

CHANGES INCORPORATED BECAUSE OF ENGAGEMENT

- Suggestions currently out of scope for the formal community engagement framework but will be taken under advisement as more general comments.

RECOMMENDATIONS

PROPOSAL	RECOMMENDATIONS
Draft Community Engagement and Consultation Policy	<p>Council:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Consider the feedback received on the Draft Community Engagement and Consultation Policy, and Consider the amendments made to the policy in response to the community feedback, and Either endorse the draft without further amendment or seek further amendments before final endorsement.
Draft Community Engagement Framework	<p>Council:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Consider the feedback received on the Draft Community Engagement Framework document, and Consider the amendments made to the document in response to the community feedback, and Either endorse the draft without further amendment or seek further amendments before final endorsement.
Other information	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Councillors note community feedback in relation to Councillor – Community relations and informal community engagement. Council officers note the feedback in relation to a potential half yearly community news leaflet giving regard to the potential costs of such a leaflet.

BACKCHANNEL COMMUNICATION – ‘CLOSE THE LOOP’

STAKEHOLDER/S	COMMUNICATION METHOD	TIMEFRAME	MESSAGE
Engagement participants that have provided an Email address.	Email	30/03/2023	How the provided feedback influenced the final framework and policy as well as the outcome.
Community members - All	Mayors Message	~30/03/2023	How the feedback received through engagement shaped the final framework and policy documents as well as the outcome.

REPORT PREPARED BY

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