Acknowledgement to Country

The City of Stirling acknowledges the Wadjak People of the Nyoongar Nation as the traditional custodians of Mooro Country. We pay our respects to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Elders past, present and emerging for they hold the memories, the traditions, the culture and hopes for Aboriginal Australia.

Community and stakeholder engagement plays a critical part in the City’s vision for reconciliation and we recognise the best outcomes for Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal people happen when we work together. The City is committed to understanding and respecting the communications and engagement needs of all stakeholders in our community, including Aboriginal people.

We recognise that under the law of the Wadjak people of the Nyoongar nation, there are strict protocols for who can represent the people. We will work with the Elders of our local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community – as the guardians of the law and protocol – to develop, implement and continuously improve a clear approach for engaging with Aboriginal people.

The City is committed to forging stronger relationships and a deeper respect for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australians. By acknowledging and respecting the diversity and history of our Aboriginal community and working together to develop and refine our engagement processes based on this, we will continue to realise our vision for reconciliation:

The City of Stirling is a harmonious, spirited, engaged and equal community in which Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal people work together to see things through the same eyes. Innovate Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP 2018 – 2020, pg. 1)
Contents

Foreword 4

Introduction 6

Community and Stakeholder Engagement Guidelines 7
Why is engagement important? 7
What are ‘stakeholders’ and are they different to ‘community’? 7
Stakeholder categories 9
Why should we consider who our stakeholders are? 9
What exactly is engagement? 9
What are the principles guiding the City’s approach to engagement? 13
When should we engage? 13
To what level should we engage? 14
Isn’t engaging with stakeholders going to create more work? 16
Stakeholders with specific engagement needs 16
Why should I follow the framework? 19
What are the essential elements and attributes of engagement? 19
Your Say Stirling – supporting a coordinated approach 19
Who is responsible for community and stakeholder engagement? 20
In summary 21
Foreword

Message from City of Stirling
Mayor Mark Irwin

The City of Stirling is committed to creating an even brighter future for everyone visiting, living, working or investing in the region.

We can achieve this by informing, listening to and involving stakeholders as well as supporting a culture of effective community and stakeholder engagement to inform decision-making that reflects their interests, needs and aspirations.

The best outcomes are achieved when we work together supportively, and in the interests of our diverse community. To do this, we need to create strong and transparent relationships with our community and provide opportunities for them to contribute to the future of their City.

Involving our stakeholders and the community in decision-making is key to being an accessible, transparent and responsive local government. It helps ensure decision-making reflects the interests, needs and aspirations of those impacted.

I encourage everyone at the City of Stirling to embrace the City’s commitment to meeting our stakeholders’ expectations, especially people across the community, to be engaged and be part of the decision-making process.
Introduction

The City of Stirling’s Community and Stakeholder Engagement Framework (framework) has been developed to provide a consistent approach in the way we communicate with our stakeholders, and involve them in the decisions we make as an organisation.

The framework is intended to lay a foundation for good engagement practices, set a minimum standard for all City staff and provide a commonly understood language to be used across the organisation.

The City’s Community and Stakeholder Engagement Framework includes:

- Community and Stakeholder Engagement Guidelines
- Community and Stakeholder Engagement Procedures
- Community and Stakeholder Engagement Policy
- Stakeholder Identification, Management and Engagement Plan
- Community and Stakeholder Engagement Toolkit (located on CoSi).

The City’s framework is to be applied to all aspects of our operations including long-term planning and day-to-day business activities. Rather than providing a one-size-fits-all approach, it intends to provide a structure and approach to community and stakeholder engagement, based on internationally recognised best-practice, which can be applied to any project within the City.

We are committed to continuous improvement by developing our approach to community and stakeholder engagement, and will work towards its integration into all planning and strategic activities undertaken across the organisation.

Staff will be supported with suitable training and development opportunities to build organisational capacity so we can deliver the City’s commitment to community and stakeholder engagement.

The implementation of the framework will be monitored and reviewed. Our success will be measured by the satisfaction of our stakeholders, the way we deliver services, the way we operate, and the level of trust stakeholders have in the City.
Community and Stakeholder Engagement Guidelines

Why is engagement important?

Engagement and participation processes are an essential part of successful planning, policy development and service delivery in local government. They improve the quality of decisions and play an important part in ensuring that the organisation is responsive to community and stakeholder needs.

These processes also ensure the City communicates and engages with stakeholders openly and inclusively. Not only is it part of our obligation under legislation, it is our commitment to residents, ratepayers, visitors and other stakeholders.

Open engagement is not just good business practice, it is critical to good governance.

What are ‘stakeholders’ and are they different to ‘community’?

Not all stakeholders are members of the community. Conversely, not all members of the community are necessarily stakeholders for a particular project, activity or initiative.

The City has adopted the following definitions:

Stakeholders

Individuals, groups or organisations interested in, impacted by or in a position to influence the City’s activities or objectives.

Community

Any specific group of people who share a similar location, interest or affiliation within the City of Stirling area. These include, but are not limited to residents, ratepayers, business owners and operators, employees, students, visitors and community groups and organisations.

Our community is extremely diverse and made up of many different stakeholder groups. From the variety of City stakeholders, our community members are generally the most interested in what we do, as they are heavily impacted by the decisions we make. Through their elected representatives, the Council, they are also in a position to influence the City’s activities or objectives the most.

The City’s stakeholders have been identified in the Stakeholder Identification, Management and Engagement Plan. This plan identifies three levels of stakeholders and breaks these down into types and then categories.

The ‘Stakeholder categories’, outlined on the following page, can be used as an easy reference for staff to use when determining the stakeholders for their projects, activities or initiatives.
Stakeholder categories

- **Tier 1**
  - Government
    » Federal and State Ministers, including opposition
    » Local Government Mayors and Councillors
    » Federal and State Government departments
    » Local Government Authorities
    » Political influencers
    » Local Members

- **Community**
  - Business
    » Local businesses
    » Local business associations
    » Suppliers, contractors, service providers
  - Industry associations and peak bodies
    » Professional and business associations
    » Not for Profit groups
    » Other NGOs
  - Community interest groups
    » State sports associations
    » Local sporting groups
    » Community groups
    » Schools
    » Resident and ratepayer associations
  - Special inclusion groups
    » People with disabilities
    » Culturally and linguistically diverse
    » Aboriginal and Torres Straight Islanders
    » Seniors
    » Youth and young people
  - Community members
    » Residents, ratepayers, customers, visitors

- **Internal**
  - Mayor and Councillors
  - Executive
    » CEO
    » Directors
  - Business Unit Managers
    » Managers and coordinators
  - Staff
    » Officers

Why should we consider who our stakeholders are?

Mapping and identifying stakeholders allows us to better understand how we can manage and engage with them to effectively deliver our projects, activities or initiatives.

The more we understand about those impacted by our work, the easier it will be for us to plan and prioritise who we need to engage with, to what level, and how often.

Understanding what drives, interests and motivates our stakeholders – particularly in relation to the City – will not only help build relationships, but also assist in targeting engagement activities.

What exactly is engagement?

The term ‘engagement’ is used within the City’s operations to describe many different interactions we have with our community and stakeholders. There are also various words that are used interchangeably, or when the meaning of the term ‘engagement’ is not clearly understood.

Often, the words we use to describe engagement are actually an integral component of it. Some of these words include:

- Communications
- Consultation
- Community engagement
- Stakeholder engagement
- Customer service
- Advertising
- Marketing
- Public participation
- Citizen engagement.

Engagement encompasses all of these things, and generally aims to do one – or a combination – of the following:

- Inform decisions – to provide opportunities for stakeholders to contribute to the decision-making processes
- Build capacity – to educate stakeholders on a specific theme or issue to increase knowledge or change behaviours
- Strengthen relationships – to build new relationships and/or improve relationships with stakeholders.

It is a conversation between the City and our stakeholders that gives those most affected by a decision an opportunity to contribute ideas, solutions and opinions so we can deliver the best outcomes and services possible.
Whether we refer to it as ‘engagement’, ‘stakeholder engagement’ or ‘community engagement’, the description doesn’t matter as much as our approach. Throughout this document, all terms will be used interchangeably.

Within the context of this framework and as defined in the City’s Stakeholder Identification, Management and Engagement Plan, engagement is:

A purposeful and planned process, which aims to ensure those affected by a decision are given an opportunity to understand and be involved in the decision-making process.

A breakdown of the definition:

Purposeful and planned process — the purpose is defined and the approach clearly articulated in a consistent format. The approach is planned according to the project, activity or initiative’s objectives, available resources, stakeholders, identified risks and timeframe. In short, there is not a one-size-fits-all approach to community engagement.

Those affected — stakeholders are identified and their level of interest in the project, activity or initiative, and ability to influence it is understood and considered. This ensures that everyone affected by the project, or who has an interest in the outcome, has an opportunity to participate.

Decision — the projects, activities, plans, strategies, initiatives and services* delivered by the City. These include:

• Policy development, implementation and application
• Planning strategies, projects and new schemes
• Facility and reserve development
• Development applications, Local Planning Scheme Amendments, new or amended Local Planning Policies, Structure Plans, Activity Centre Plans and Local Development Plans
• Ongoing delivery of City services, projects and operations
• Capital works projects including traffic design and road modifications
• Community and social planning to identify community needs
• Organisational planning and strategy
• Community program development.

* Please note, the word ‘project’ will be used to describe the terms: projects, activities, plans, strategies, initiatives and services.

Understand — appropriate information is effectively communicated so that stakeholders understand the project and can make a well-informed and meaningful contribution.

Be involved — a two-way process where the methods of engagement are chosen to foster diversity and inclusiveness in participation. It works to avoid engagement being limited to the vocal minority or the easy to reach.

Decision-making process — involved in a meaningful way that aims to influence the solutions, options and decisions as much as possible, wherever appropriate.
What are the principles guiding the City’s approach to engagement?

The City has adapted the IAP2 Core Values to shape our commitment to stakeholder and community engagement. Building our engagement approach using the guiding principles below will ensure the development and implementation of engagement processes by the City are consistent with international best-practice approaches.

Guiding principles:

1. We believe that those affected by a decision have the right to be involved in the decision-making process.
2. We will be clear about how participants’ feedback and contributions will influence the decision.
3. We believe that the best decisions are the ones that recognise and communicate the needs and interests of both the City and the stakeholders in our community.
4. We will actively identify those affected by or interested in a decision and make every effort to support and encourage participation in the decision-making process.
5. We are committed to providing equal access and inclusion for all members of our diverse community. We will understand the diverse range of needs that stakeholders in our community have and choose the methods of engagement within our means that will best support their participation in the decision-making process.
6. We will ensure we give the stakeholders in our community the information they need, at the right time and communicated in the best way to support their understanding, so that they can participate in a meaningful way.
7. We will keep the stakeholders in our community updated on the progress and let them know how their input affected the decision.

At their core, our guiding principles describe an engagement approach that is genuine, transparent, timely, accountable, purposeful, planned, responsive, inclusive and accessible.

When should we engage?

Community and stakeholder engagement should take place:

- When the views or expertise of our stakeholders provide insights or information to help in the development of plans, solutions or decisions
- If the issue will significantly affect existing levels of service
- If the issue is complex or likely to be controversial
- When there is a need to create support and/or community ownership of a project
- If the matter will have a long-term impact on the community
- When it is a legislative requirement to do so
- When Council determines that the community should be engaged.

It is always best to consider engagement needs early in the project process. Proper planning at an early stage will identify opportunities to involve affected and interested stakeholders and identify and address potential risks to your project.

It may not always be possible to engage the stakeholders in our community on every matter. They may have little or no ability to influence a decision, or time and available resources might be prohibitive.

If this is the case, effectively communicating the details and impacts of the project or decision to affected and interested community members is essential.

It is particularly important if engagement has previously occurred, even if this was undertaken by a different business unit.

When we don’t effectively communicate, we can be perceived as not having transparent decision-making processes and risk losing our community’s trust. We may also damage positive relationships developed by other business units by undermining previous engagement activities.
To what level should we engage?

The main consideration when choosing the appropriate level of engagement is how much a stakeholder can influence the decision or outcome. The IAP2 Spectrum is the most recognised resource used to understand the various levels of engagement and determine an appropriate approach for any stage of a project.

The level of engagement and approach can change depending on the stage of a project, or the stakeholder.

IAP2 Spectrum of Public Participation
© International Association for Public Participation www.iap2.org

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Level of engagement</th>
<th>Inform</th>
<th>Consult</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Public participation goal</td>
<td>To provide stakeholders with balanced and objective information to assist them understand the problems, alternatives and/or solutions to enable them to provide meaningful feedback and make informed decisions. Nb. Inform happens throughout the process – not only after the final decision has been made.</td>
<td>To obtain feedback from stakeholders on options, analysis, alternatives and/or decisions.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Our promise to stakeholders</td>
<td>We will keep you informed.</td>
<td>We will keep you informed, listen to and acknowledge concerns and provide feedback on how public input influenced the decision.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Role of stakeholders</td>
<td>Listen</td>
<td>Contribute</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| Examples of tools and methods | • Your Say Stirling page  
• Image gallery  
• FAQ section  
• Document library  
• Corporate website  
• Social media – Facebook, Twitter, YouTube  
• Media  
• Advertising  
• Email, mail out  
• Corporate publications – Stirling Scene, Scoop, MailChimp eNewsletter  
• Displays  
• Walking tour | • Your Say Stirling page  
• Survey tool  
• Polls tool  
• Focus groups  
• Surveys  
• Public meetings  
• Ballot  
• Pop up events  
• Listening posts |
It is important to note that ‘Inform’ is not considered a level of engagement on its own, but instead an integral part of engagement at all levels. Communications and marketing tools sit at the Spectrum’s ‘Inform’ level, and are vital for all engagement activities and programs.

Engagement is a two-way process, which focuses on the ability to give stakeholders the opportunity to participate and provide feedback. But meaningful participation can’t occur if stakeholders aren’t aware of an engagement activity or don’t understand the details of the project or initiative.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Involve</th>
<th>Collaborate</th>
<th>Empower</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>To work directly with stakeholders throughout the process to ensure that stakeholder issues and concerns are consistently understood and considered</td>
<td>To partner with stakeholders in each aspect of the decision including the development of alternatives and the identification of the preferred solution</td>
<td>To place the final decision-making in the hands of the community or public</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>We will work with you to ensure that your concerns and issues are directly reflected in the alternatives developed and provide feedback on how public input influenced the decision</td>
<td>We will look to you for direct advice and innovation in formulating solutions and incorporate your advice and recommendations into the decisions to the maximum extent possible</td>
<td>We will implement what you decide</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Participate</th>
<th>Partner</th>
<th>Decide</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| - Your Say Stirling page  
- Ideas tool  
- Smart forum  
- Guest book  
- Brain Stormer  
- Places tool  
- Vox pops  
- Focus groups  
- Workshops | - Your Say Stirling private groups  
- Citizen advisory/ reference committees  
- Participatory decision-making  
- Meetings | - Elected member representation  
- Ballots  
- Citizen juries  
- Delegated decisions |

Increasing level of input into decision  
Increasing amount of resources and time required
Isn’t engaging with stakeholders going to create more work?

A common misconception that often prevents meaningful engagement is that projects will be held up or their direction will be “taken off track” by making stakeholders aware of an issue or project and involving them in the decision-making process.

But in fact with proper planning and delivery, most risks can be identified and mitigated before they become an issue.

In addition, involving stakeholders appropriately in the early stages can build trust, which is vital to the success of the City’s operations.

It is often much more of a risk to deliver a project that stakeholders have not had a chance to understand or an opportunity to contribute their thoughts. The cost of not engaging stakeholders – in terms of money and reputational damage – can be huge.

Imagine putting your heart and soul into a project, only to discover once it is with Council for consideration, or being delivered, it is not supported by the community and requires major changes or needs to be started from scratch!

It is often understood a project needs to be technically feasible, financially achievable and environmentally sustainable. However, if you don’t have something that is socially acceptable, it can delay or undo your project.

Stakeholders with specific engagement needs

Engaging with stakeholders in our community can be challenging.

With such a large and diverse community there are often very different needs, values, aspirations and barriers to communication and participation.

Some groups can have specific engagement needs. These can include:

- Children and young people
- Women
- Older people
- People with disability
- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people
- People from culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) backgrounds.

For a number of reasons including:

- Digital literacy
- English proficiency
- Cultural barriers
- Social isolation
- Limited understanding of government processes
- Accessibility of venues
- Transport
- Caring responsibilities
- School/work commitments.

We are committed to providing equal opportunities for all of our stakeholders and by considering the needs of the harder to reach people or groups, we will gain valuable feedback and input.

It is easier than you may think to address some of the perceived challenges to reach and engage with these groups.

The first step is to identify any specific needs that your stakeholders may have. Once you have recognised any barriers or challenges, you can plan your engagement with these in mind.

Remember that the Communications and Engagement team is always available to offer advice.
Why should I follow the framework?

One of the aims of this framework is to support better coordination of community and stakeholder engagement across the organisation. This will:

• Reduce duplication of effort
• Enable better and more effective use of resources
• Ensure stakeholders don’t feel ‘fatigued’ by multiple contacts from different areas of the organisation
• Identify existing relationships with stakeholders and avoid conflicting efforts
• Ensure stakeholders are appropriately informed throughout the process
• Enable sharing of information and knowledge
• Ensure stakeholders are provided consistent and appropriate messages aligned with the City’s strategic objectives
• Ensure we are transparent and working as one organisation towards a common goal.

Your Say Stirling – supporting a coordinated approach

While face-to-face interaction and traditional communication methods will always be an essential component of engagement, stakeholders are increasingly using digital technologies to access information and participate in daily life.

Your Say Stirling has been developed to be a ‘hub’ for all engagement activities and programs at the City.

The City’s online engagement hub, Your Say Stirling:

• Provides a variety of online engagement tools from surveys and submission forms to discussion forums and ideas generation and prioritisation tools
• Is a data management system for both qualitative and quantitative information
• Includes two major analytical tools for comment tagging and quantitative reporting
• Is a participant registration system
• Supports many formats of information including video, text, images and documents
• Is integrated with MailChimp for easier and more coordinated email communication
• Is the City’s preferred online survey tool.

Visit www.yoursay.stirling.wa.gov.au to see it in action!

What are the essential elements and attributes of engagement?

Planned and purposeful  Transparent  Inclusive and accessible

Timely  Genuine  Responsive  Accountable
Who is responsible for community and stakeholder engagement?

Each of the City's Directorates – Infrastructure, Planning, Corporate Services, Community Development and the Office of the Chief Executive Officer – as well as the Council, engage with the stakeholders in our community at some level, and have a role to play in supporting the City's community and stakeholder engagement commitment.

Elected Council
- Makes decisions in accordance with the Local Government Act 1995 and relevant legislation
- Supports and encourages community and stakeholder engagement by approving adequate funding and resources to support the process
- Determines where additional engagement is required.

Directors
- Ensure the framework is appropriately implemented and applied across the City
- Support community and stakeholder engagement by approving adequate funding and resources to support the process
- Champion continuous improvement of framework and the City's approach to community and stakeholder engagement.

Business Unit Managers and Coordinators
- Oversee the engagement needs and planning for projects within their business unit
- Support community and stakeholder engagement by budgeting for funding and resources to support the process
- Ensure staff are adequately skilled to implement engagement strategies by supporting training
- Drive the adoption of the framework within their teams and business unit processes
- Report on engagement activities included in the City's Engagement Register.

Project Owners
- Determine engagement needs for projects
- Develop and implement community and stakeholder engagement plans, with support from the Communications and Engagement team, according to the framework
- Update the City's Engagement Register
- Provide appropriate content
- Provide feedback to participants in a timely and effective manner.

Community Engagement Advisor
- Works with the project owner to assist in the development of a communications and engagement plan and to identify the appropriate methods and tools to achieve the identified objectives
- Ensures the City's approach to engagement remains consistent with current trends and technology
- Strategically manages the Your Say Stirling engagement hub
- Oversees the implementation and review of the framework
- Manages the Engagement Register
- Facilitates the Internal Engagement Network
- Works with the project owner, Marketing Officer and Communications Officer to ensure messaging and communications are integrated across all channels
- Tracks engagement activities across the organisation to ensure the City maintains a coordinated and consistent approach to community and stakeholder engagement.

Internal Engagement Network champions
- Advocates the framework and supports the application of the guiding principles within their business units.

Communications Officer
- Works with the project owner, Community Engagement Advisor and Marketing Officer to ensure messaging and communications are integrated across all channels.

Marketing Officer
- Supports the promotional and information needs identified in the communications and engagement plan
- develops and implements marketing plans to support the production of promotional and informational materials and tools
- Works with the project owner, Community Engagement Advisor and Communications Officer to ensure messaging and communications are integrated across all channels.
In summary

**Community and stakeholder engagement is about:**

- A City-wide collaborative approach
- Understanding who is impacted by a project, and how
- Determining the appropriate level of engagement for each stage of a project
- Drawing from a pool of knowledge in the community to help guide decisions
- Satisfying a legislative requirement to seek feedback from stakeholders in our community, but in a genuine and effective way
- Providing stakeholders with the information they need at the right time so they can be involved in a meaningful way
- Identifying issues and problems so potential risks to a project, or the City, can be understood and addressed
- Having a planned and purposeful approach, focused on stakeholders
- Being clear about what stakeholders can have input into, and what they cannot
- A positive and collaborative process that makes people feel they are being listened to, even if they don’t agree with the final outcome

- Ensuring all stakeholders have equal access to engagement opportunities
- Enabling Council to make better decisions informed by an understanding of stakeholder and community needs, values and aspirations
- Gaining a representative community view – not just the views of the ‘vocal minority’.

**Community and stakeholder engagement is not about:**

- Promising to meet community and stakeholder expectations every time
- Seeking feedback on every decision
- Engaging everybody in the community every time
- Ticking a box
- Influencing a stakeholder’s opinion or persuading them to a pre-determined decision
- A one-size-fits-all approach.