

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT STRATEGY



**CITY OF
PARRAMATTA**

This strategy reflects the ambitions of the City to create a shared vision across engagement. It aims to provide a roadmap for creating and maintaining good relationships and effective engagement with our community and stakeholders. It will act as a guide for consultation, research and engagement across the organisation in order to ensure best practice engagement with our communities now and into the future.

Disclaimer

Every reasonable effort has been made to ensure that this document is correct at the time of issue. City of Parramatta Council disclaims all liability in respect of the consequence of anything done or omitted.

Legislative Requirements

Community engagement strategy
– A Council must establish and implement a strategy (called its community engagement strategy) for engagement with the local community when developing its plans, policies and programs and for the purpose of determining its activities (other than routine administrative matters). (Local Government Act)

Prepared by Marketing and City Identity and City Strategy

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JOINT WELCOME BY GENERAL MANAGER AND ADMINISTRATOR



Our shared vision for the City of Parramatta is:

***SYDNEY'S CENTRAL CITY, LIVEABLE,
SUSTAINABLE AND PRODUCTIVE –
INSPIRED BY OUR COMMUNITIES.***

This vision was created by engaging with over 9,000 stakeholders, staff and the community over the past 12 months. Our vision also aligns with the Greater Sydney Commission's plan for our region and city – to be Sydney's Central city. The vision is supported by four priorities: liveable, sustainable, productive and leading - which provide high level direction for our City moving forward.

Here at the City of Parramatta, we strive for best-practice engagement and consultation both online and in-person. We believe it's important that the community can see and have a direct impact on the decisions of their Council and our City - which is why we have developed this strategy.

We value input from the community and stakeholders as it helps us to create good public policy and a city that has people at its core. It also helps ensure that the services we provide are relevant, timely and valuable.

Our approach to community engagement, research and planning is outlined in this strategy as it relates to all policies, training, stakeholder engagement and implementation.

We look forward to listening and engaging with our community through this strategy - and to creating a stronger, more participative City for all.



Greg Dyer
Interim General Manager



Amanda Chadwick
Administrator

CITY OF PARRAMATTA

VISION AND PRIORITIES

FRAMEWORK

Community will be at the heart of everything that we do – as articulated in our Vision and Priorities Framework and in this Stakeholder Engagement strategy.

Over 9,000 people from across the City contributed to the development of this framework which provides high level direction for Council, by filling in a survey, completing a telephone survey, visiting a pop-up kiosk, attending a workshop or being part of a focus group.

Vision and
Priorities



Council values





WHAT IS ENGAGEMENT?

Engagement is about involving the community in the decision making process and it is at the very core of our democratic processes in local government. The City of Parramatta Council has an organisation-wide commitment to undertake consistent and best practice stakeholder engagement. We aim to provide transparency, openness and a sense of accountability through a range of engagement techniques with our community, stakeholders and visitors.

WHY DO WE NEED IT?

First and foremost people have a right to participate in civic decision making and a right to have their views and voices heard.

For Council, it provides the opportunity to understand varied points of view, gather comprehensive information and to make better decisions and deliver better services. It also increases community understanding and support for the organisation's goals, improves transparency and accountability, and helps to build trust within the community and with others.

Council must also comply with a collection of different State and National legislation which set out when we must initiate community consultation. A detailed list is outlined in Council's Community and Stakeholder Engagement policy however key references include:

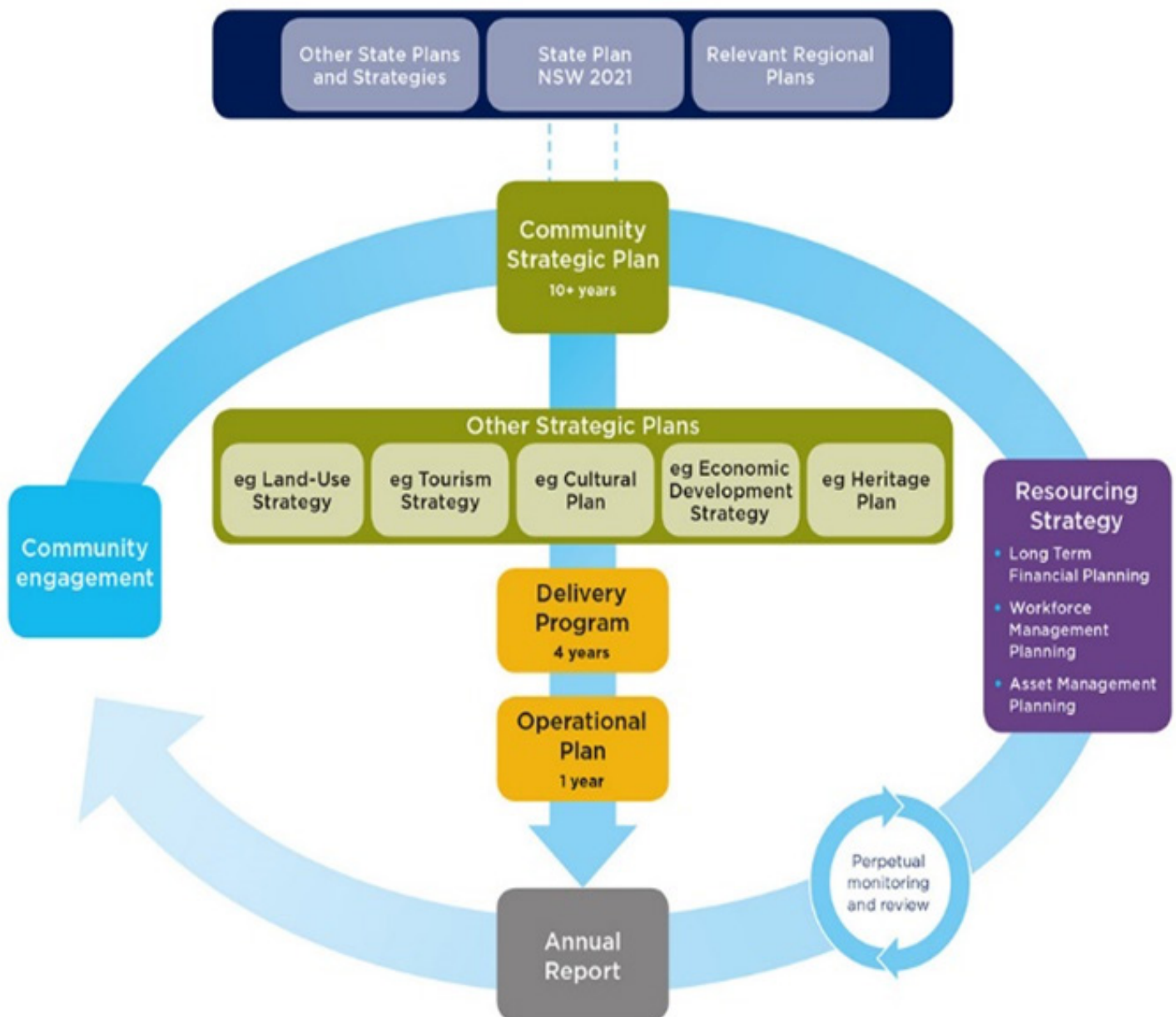
Section 402(4) of the Local Government Act 1993 which requires that: The council must establish and implement a strategy (its community engagement strategy), based on social justice principles, for engagement with the local community when developing the community strategic plan.

A yet to commence amendment made to the Act by the Local Government Amendment (Governance and Planning) Act 2016 will insert a new provision, section 402A which will require the following:

A council must establish and implement a strategy (called its community engagement strategy) for engagement with the local community when developing its plans, policies and programs and for the purpose of determining its activities (other than routine administrative matters).



INTEGRATED PLANNING & REPORTING FRAMEWORK:



Councils produce many policies and plans but they are all inter-connected through the Integrated Planning and Reporting Framework (IP&R). This framework provides the vehicle through which planning can be achieved in a holistic and sustainable way for the future.

Community Engagement influences every part of Council's activities ranging from the day to day to the setting of over-arching goals and strategies as is illustrated by the Integrated Planning and Reporting Framework and Council's Vision and Priorities Framework.

HOW WE ENGAGE: THE CITY'S ENGAGEMENT CHARTER AND PRINCIPLES



Council has developed a set of nine principles that will guide and shape our approach to all our community and stakeholder engagement activities. We hold ourselves accountable to these principles:

BUILDING RELATIONSHIPS

We act in an honest, open and respectful way at all times to build strong relationships, partnerships and trust with our stakeholders

RIGHT TO BE INVOLVED

We believe that our stakeholders have a right to be involved in decisions that affect them

CLARITY OF PURPOSE

We are clear about why, how and about what we are engaging with our stakeholders

ACCESSIBLE AND INCLUSIVE

We provide a range of engagement activities to ensure that the broadest possible range of stakeholders have the opportunity to participate

TIMELY

We engage early on and provide sufficient time for stakeholders to provide input

TAILORED

We use a range of engagement and communication methods that suit the purpose of engagement and the range of stakeholders involved

COORDINATED

We collaborate across Council to ensure our engagement activities are coordinated

TRANSPARENT

We make our decisions in an open and transparent way and provide feedback to our stakeholders in order to explain our decisions and let them know how their input has influenced the outcome

LEARNING FROM PRACTICE


We evaluate our engagement activities and learn from the feedback that has been provided to us.

HOW WE ENGAGE:

IAP2 SPECTRUM AND LEVELS OF ENGAGEMENT

Council's approach to stakeholder engagement is also built upon the IAP2 spectrum. The IAP2 Spectrum for Public Participation is an internationally recognised platform used to provide guidance to the public service, not for profit sector, private industry and communities. It's a model recommended by the Division of Local Government for preparation of Community Engagement Strategies associated with the Integrated Planning and Reporting Framework.

The spectrum identifies that there are different levels of engagement from "Informing" through to "Empowering". No single approach to engagement will serve every project. The spectrum requires that the level of engagement must be determined by considering the issue, problem or opportunity requiring engagement, the objectives to be achieved by engaging and the extent that stakeholders can assist Council to make decisions.

INCREASING LEVELS OF ENGAGEMENT 					
	Inform	Consult	Involve	Collaborate	Empower
Stakeholder engagement goal	To provide stakeholders with balanced and objective information to assist them in understanding the problems, alternatives, opportunities and/or solutions	To obtain stakeholder feedback on analysis, alternatives and/or decisions	To work directly with stakeholders throughout the process to ensure that stakeholder's concerns and aspirations are consistently understood and considered.	To partner with stakeholders in each aspect of the decision including the development of alternatives and the identification of the preferred solution.	To place final decision making in the hands of the public.
Promise to the public	We will keep stakeholders informed	We will keep stakeholder informed, listened to and acknowledge concerns and provide feedback on how stakeholder input influenced the decision	We will work with stakeholders and ensure that their concerns and issues are directly reflected in the alternatives developed and provide feedback on how stakeholder input influenced the decision.	We will seek direct advice and innovation in formulating solutions and to incorporate community advice and recommendations into the decisions to the maximum extent possible.	We will implement what stakeholders decide.
Examples Tools & Techniques:	Examples: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fact sheets • Websites • Open houses • Newsletters, bulletins • Social Media 	Examples: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Written submissions • Focus groups • Surveys • Public meetings • Social Media 	Examples: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Workshops • Deliberative polling • Expert panels • Forums • Social Media 	Examples: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Stakeholder Advisory Committees • Participatory decision-making • Social Media 	Examples: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Citizen juries • Ballots • Delegated decisions

WHAT IAP2 LOOKS LIKE IN PRACTICE FOR THE CITY OF PARRAMATTA

Below are some examples of how the framework will be applied at the City of Parramatta. The framework is not limited to this list but it is what we are able to define.

WHEN	IAP2 GOAL	HOW	WHAT
Council's key long-term plans – Community Strategic Plan, Vision & Priorities	Involve	Work directly with the community to ensure priorities are reflected in the decision Provide a range of opportunities / channels for resident's and ratepayers to share their views	Directly reflect community concerns and aspirations in the finalised plan
Council's Annual Plan – operational plan & budget	Involve	Work directly with the community to ensure priorities are reflected in the decision. Provide a range of opportunities / channels for resident's and ratepayers to share their views	Directly reflect community concerns and aspirations in the finalised plan
Council's key planning instruments – LEP, DCP, section 94, VPA	Consult	Ask for community views about options identified by Council. In addition to minimum statutory provisions, take all reasonable steps to ensure known stakeholders are advised of the opportunity to input	Recognise community views and concerns & ensure these are reflected as inputs into Council's final decision
Council's other key policies	Consult	Ask for community views about options identified by Council. Take all reasonable steps to ensure key and known stakeholders are advised of the opportunity to input	Recognise community views and concerns & ensure these are reflected as inputs into Council's final decision
DA and planning proposals	Consult	Ask for community views about options identified by Council. In addition to minimum statutory provisions, take all reasonable steps to ensure stakeholders are advised of the opportunity to input	Recognise community views and concerns & ensure these are reflected as inputs into Council's final decision
New capital works & Place making	Involve	Work directly with the community to ensure priorities are reflected in the decision. Provide a range of opportunities / channels for resident's and ratepayers to share their views	Directly reflect community concerns and aspirations in the finalised plan
Maintenance and renewal capital works	Inform	Share balanced information on current activities and plans. Take all reasonable steps to ensure stakeholders are advised of Council's proposal	Communicate updates to keep community informed
Other	Inform	Share balanced information on current activities and plans. Take all reasonable steps to ensure stakeholders are advised of Council's proposal	Communicate updates to keep community informed

WHO WE ENGAGE OUR COMMUNITY

If we are to effectively engage we must have a clear picture of who we are engaging with. The diverse nature of our community as outlined below highlights that a one-size-fits-all engagement approach will not work – we must constantly employ a range of engagement methods.

Key facts

Currently Parramatta is home to 230,000 people and over the next 5 years another 41,000 people will move here. (Source: *Parramatta 2021: Unlocking the potential of a new economy*)

We're a fast growing city with a diverse community – these factors help to frame how we engage and when.

This video clip explains, in a nutshell the current makeup of our city. (www.cityofparramatta.nsw.gov.au/about-parramatta/connecting-with-council/demographic-data)

IN SUMMARY:

We are fast growing. Over 245,000 people live in the City of Parramatta. In the next five years, our population will grow by 41,000. We are young, but have a diverse range of age groups. 21% of our population is under 18 and 17% are aged over 60 years. Our median age is 35 years, a year younger than Greater Sydney. By 2021, 10.6% of our population will be aged 18–24 years. By 2021, the number of people over 60 years will increase by over 11,000.

We are diverse: 27% of the population arrived in Australia less than five years ago. 46% of our residents speak a language other than English at home. The region will continue to be a centre of immigration and migrants will be attracted to calling the area home with its different cultures.

We are prosperous. Over 21% of the population are considered high income households. In the next five

years, an estimated 22,000 additional people will be working in Parramatta. With over \$10 billion in projected investment, the City will attract new workers in knowledge-intensive jobs.

We have vulnerable communities. Nearly 15% of households are considered low income, and earn less than \$600 per week. Nearly 14% of people do not have an internet connection at home. Inequality across Australia has risen over the past 20 years and the share of wealth going to the lowest 20% of households continues to decrease.

Population growth. In the next five years, Parramatta's population will grow by 41,000 residents at almost twice the pace of Australia. This is the equivalent of 2 busloads of new residents per week.

Employment growth. By 2021, an estimated 22,000 additional people will be working in Parramatta totalling 186,000 (14% growth). Parramatta's investment boom: over the next five years, more than \$10 billion will be invested in constructing roads, light rail, schools, hospitals, universities offices, shops, accommodation, a museum, a sports stadium and new public spaces.

Primed for take-off. Parramatta's economy is primed for the new one million annual visitors expected at the new Museum of Applied Arts and Sciences in 2022, and the 2025 commissioning of the Western Sydney Airport.

We're the accessible heart of Sydney. The Parramatta LGA is accessible to 2.3 million people within 45 minutes by either car and / or public transport.

AIMS, OBJECTIVES AND KEY ACTIONS OF THE STRATEGY

The Stakeholder Engagement strategy is aligned with Council's community engagement aspirations as expressed through the Vision and Priorities Statement, the IP&R framework and all relevant legislation. It builds on community research and insights and adopts an IAP2 framework approach. The strategy provides clear engagement goals, objectives and actions for Council including:

OVERARCHING GOAL:

To involve, engage, listen and be transparent with all of our communities when formulating any policies, programs or activities (other than routine administrative matters).

OBJECTIVE 1:

To provide a best practice, consistent and considered approach to engagement that is meaningful and appropriate for our diverse communities of all ages and abilities

Actions:

- Adopt an organisational wide-approach to engagement through the development of a stakeholder engagement strategy, policy, staff toolkit and the adoption of the IAP2 framework
- Utilise best practice online communication and engagement techniques including online panel participation, focus groups, citizens juries, social media as well as the use of video and the translation of materials online to both reach CALD communities and to create energy and excitement around the City's engagement activities
- Provide staff with support and regular training in the IAP2 framework
- Provide staff with on-going support and guidance regarding best practice tools particularly for legislated engagement projects via a centralised research and engagement unit
- Conduct an annual stakeholder research program to provide community insights and improve and inform internal decision making
- Conduct an annual community satisfaction survey and maintain an overall satisfaction rating of 8 in 10 people who are satisfied/highly satisfied with council services
- Continue to participate in the NSW government led State-wide community satisfaction survey and maintain our current index score of 68 which is above the average of our peers in merged

Council's both in a metropolitan and state wide context. And continue to improve on the top three areas identified for improvement by the survey.

- Share engagement and research insights with staff via quarterly presentations, documented case studies and the internal publication of data to encourage informed, best-practice decision making

OBJECTIVE 2:

Raise awareness of Council's social media and digital platforms to increase community participation in the decision making process

Actions:

- Undertake targeted communication campaigns to raise awareness of Council's social and digital media channels
- Cross-promote channels at all Council events and on all Council publications

OBJECTIVE 3:

Report back to the community on engagement activities so they are aware of the outcomes

Actions:

- Communicate outcomes of engagement activities to participants and publish engagement summaries on Council's website, social media channels and at Council Meetings
- Communicate and publish Council's annual community satisfaction survey key findings

OBJECTIVE 4:

To increase participation in Council's online engagement panel, Our City Your Say annually by 3% and for the panel to be demographically representative.

Actions:

- Actively recruit new panel members at key Council activities and events
- Identify demographic gaps within the panel and actively target those groups to ensure good cross-representation
- Improve youth participation by 3% through targeted promotion
- Maintain a high participation rate of 40% on average amongst panel members

OBJECTIVE 5:

To ensure best use of limited engagement resources across the organisation.

Actions:

- Utilise a centralised specialist research and engagement function to:
- run and monitor Council's highly effective online engagement panel
- provide staff with on-going engagement support and training
- raise awareness of best practice and efficient engagement methods
- Empower and upskill staff by conducting regular staff training sessions in the IAP2 framework to improve engagement outcomes
- Encourage community adoption of social and digital channels as an efficient and cost-effective means of communication and engagement

OBJECTIVE 6:

To constantly evaluate and explore contemporary engagement methods with a view to improving and extending the City's engagement activities.

Actions:

- Conduct annual audits of Council's Engagement Strategy and activities to track progress against objectives and identify areas for improvement
- Maintain organisational membership of the IAP2 Australia network
- Maintain membership of peak research bodies including the Australian Market and Social Research Society
- Actively participate in conferences, training and forums
- Actively collaborate and share knowledge with other local, state and federal agencies where appropriate
- Identify and work with innovative and best practice industry providers



BUDGET

A dedicated budget for community engagement activities regarding key Corporate Planning documents such as the Integrated Planning and Reporting Framework suite sits within the Governance and Planning portfolios. All other community engagement activities with the exception

of the annual community satisfaction survey, the management of the online panel and staff training are to be funded by the relevant Council department seeking input from the community.



EVALUATION

Monitoring and reviewing Council's engagement methods and activities is essential in order to identify areas for improvement and to realise goals more efficiently. Council will use a variety of evaluation methods to assess its progress including:

- Undertaking quarterly and annual audits to check progress against the objectives identified in this strategy
- Reviewing the engagement strategy, policy and toolkit every 4 years
- Undertaking a community satisfaction

survey annually

- Continue participation in the NSW government led State-wide community satisfaction survey and maintain our current index score of 68
- Participation levels in engagement activities including the Our City Your Say panel
- Verbal and written feedback from all stakeholders on the effectiveness of our engagement activities
- Number of staff trained in the IAP2 framework annually
- Level of quantitative and qualitative information collected

FURTHER RESOURCES AND SUPPORT



Council's engagement strategy is supported through the following approaches and resources:

- **'Our City Your Say'** a highly engaged panel of over **7,000 people** who engage via online surveys and online forums to provide feedback on a range of issues and concerns, segmented down to suburb level. This panel is managed by the Research and Consultation team and aims to be at or above 1% total population of the local government area (2,300)
- **A Centralised** unit that features specialist engagement and communications expertise, Market Research Officer and Qualitative Researcher, and ATSI Stakeholder Engagement Officer
- **Stakeholder Engagement Policy that embeds the IAP2 framework and Staff Toolkit** which provides a guide to the application of the kit.
- **Staff training** in the Stakeholder Engagement Policy and Toolkit – providing best practice engagement training and support for teams within the organisation with exclusive one-day training for staff
- **An engagement brand** has been developed for use across Council's engagement activities which invites the community to participate and have their say.
- **Encouraging a more informal** 'conversational' feel to all communications. We want the community to feel like they're hearing from an old friend. An informal but respectful tone is extremely powerful.
- **External provider networks and knowledge** for engaging external expertise through a range of government and corporate research and engagement suppliers.
- **Software that works.** The Research and Consultation team utilise specialist market research based software for online and offline surveys, optimised for mobile phones and language translations. The team is currently investigating forum software to allow for online focus groups as an additional service.
- **Best practice and Industry recognition.** The research and consultation team members hold membership with AMSRS (The Australian Market Research Society) and IAP2.
- **Multicultural community.** Investment in translation of online and print materials that align with key community demographics.





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