

CITY OF
CANADA BAY

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT POLICY

Date of Adoption: 26 September 2017
Effective Date: 26 September 2017

Policy purpose and scope

This policy provides a framework for the way the City of Canada Bay (Council) will undertake community engagement on issues or decisions for which Council is responsible.

The policy applies to all aspects of Council operations including long term planning and decision making and day to day business activities. The policy does not apply to development applications as consultation on these is undertaken in accordance with the City of Canada Bay Development Control Plan and associated legislation.

While the policy is designed to guide community engagement activities that are initiated by Council, Councillors and Council officers should apply the same philosophical and principled approach when Council is engaged by community groups or other organisations.

Definitions

Community engagement

Council's definition of community engagement is based on the United Nations Declaration on Community Engagement (2005).

Community engagement is a two-way process of dialogue by which the aspirations, concerns, needs and values of our local community and other relevant stakeholders are incorporated into policy development, planning, decision-making, service delivery and assessment. It is viewed as critical to effective, transparent and accountable governance.

Community

Council defines community in the broadest possible sense to include City of Canada Bay residents, ratepayers, businesses, community organisations, visitors, neighbouring councils, other tiers of government and other stakeholders with an interest in the City.

Social Justice

Social justice is based upon the values of access, equity, rights and responsibilities to enable all citizens to participate.

Council commitment to engagement

Council is committed to ensuring:

- an engaged City with effective two way flow of information between Council and the community
- that local decision making is transparent and works in the interest of the community considering its many and diverse stakeholders
- that effective internal processes and controls exist within Council to ensure good governance and effective community representation.

Principles of Engagement

As part of Council's commitment, the following Principles will guide all community engagement:

1. Community engagement activities are based on the belief that those who are affected by a decision have a right to be involved in the decision-making process.
2. Council recognises that it is neither practical nor possible to undertake community engagement on every issue, however, when a decision has the potential to impact the local community significantly, Council will seek out and facilitate the involvement of those potentially affected by, or with an interest in, a decision.
3. When undertaking community engagement, Councillors and Council staff will present their views and professional recommendations in an open and respectful manner to inform the community and to assist them to reach a knowledgeable outcome.
4. All materials developed and techniques used by Council to support community engagement will be genuine, unbiased, understandable and appropriate to ensure the community can participate in a meaningful way.
5. When undertaking community engagement, Council's commitment is that the community's contribution will influence the decision.
6. Council will communicate to engagement participants how their input can and did affect the decision.

7. All community engagement activities will consider social justice principles of access, equity, rights and participation of all citizens.

When Council will undertake community engagement

Council will undertake formal community engagement in the following circumstances:

- where community input can improve a project or enhance decision making
- to help identify community needs not already known
- in response to expressions of community interest
- when Council resolves to consult the community
- when required by law, policy or by agreement with a government agency or statutory body.

Roles and responsibilities

Councillors

Councillors play a significant role in leading and directing community engagement and have a responsibility to ensure that Council's community engagement principles are reflected in the community engagement strategy and individual action plans, and that the input of the community is respected in decision making.

Council Officers

Council officers have an important role in developing and delivering effective community engagement opportunities around issues that may impact upon the community. Council officers have a responsibility to ensure that engagement techniques, materials and assessments are undertaken in accordance with this policy.

Community Members

Community members have an integral role in participating in community engagement activities that are of interest to them. Community members should do so with a willingness to take part in a two-way dialogue and be mindful that participation in a community engagement does not guarantee an outcome with which the individual may agree.

Supporting documents

Community engagement strategy

The Council, under the Local Government Act 1993, is required to have a community engagement strategy, based upon social justice principles, for engaging the community when developing the community strategic plan and other planning activities. A community engagement strategy will be maintained to describe how the Policy will be implemented and it will provide a framework for individual community engagement action plans.

Community Engagement Action Plans

Individual community engagement action plans will be developed for all projects that require engagement with the community.

Hierarchy of documents

The following table describes the hierarchy of documents

Document	Role	Purpose
Policy	Why	The Policy describes the requirements under the Local Government Act for community engagement and Council's commitment and principles
Strategy	How	The Strategy provides a framework for all community engagement undertaken by Council.
Individual Action Plans	What	Action Plans identify specific actions that will be implemented to achieve community engagement outcomes.

Related legislation and other documents

- NSW Local Government Act 1993
- NSW Planning and Assessment Act 1979
- Council's current Community Strategic Plan

- Other policies of Council
- Council's Community Engagement Strategy.

Review of the Policy

Council will formally review this Policy after each Council election, or as deemed required.