

ENCL: 2ND ORDINARY COUNCIL MEETING/OPEN **AGENDA ITEM:**
YES

POLICY 025 – COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

REPORT No.: 17C0051 SJ:kl

COMMON No.: 1612461

DATE: 27/06/2017

Presenter: **Manager Engagement and Participation, Sheree Jeeves**

Approved: **General Manager Community & Cultural Services,
Anna Malgorzewicz**

PURPOSE

The purpose of this report is to present the City of Darwin Policy 025 Community Engagement following community consultation.

LINK TO STRATEGIC PLAN

The issues addressed in this Report are in accordance with the following Goals/Strategies of the City of Darwin 2012 – 2016 as outlined in the ‘Evolving Darwin Towards 2020 Strategic Plan’:-

Goal

5 Effective and Responsible Governance

Outcome

5.3 Good governance

Key Strategies

5.3.4 Encourage community participation by engaging, communicating and working in partnership with the community

KEY ISSUES

- The current Policy 025 Community Consultation was adopted in August 2011 and is due for review (**Attachment A**).
- An engagement process was carried out with City of Darwin staff to review and update the policy.
- The staff engagement informed the draft Policy 025 Community Engagement which was then endorsed by Council for community wide consultation.
- The community consultation was undertaken from 29 May to 19 June 2017. The community feedback is presented in **Attachment B**.
- The final Policy 025 Community Engagement is presented to Council for endorsement (**Attachment C**).

RECOMMENDATIONS

THAT it be a recommendation to Council:-

- A. THAT Report Number 17C0051 SJ:am entitled Community Engagement Policy, be received and noted.
- B. THAT Council rescind City of Darwin Policy 025 Community Consultation as contained at **Attachment A** to report number 17C0051 SJ:am entitled Policy 025 – Community Engagement.
- C. THAT Council adopt City of Darwin Policy 025 Community Engagement as contained at **Attachment C** to report number 17C0051 SJ:am entitled Policy 025 – Community Engagement.

BACKGROUND

DECISION NO.21\5367 (16/05/17)

Review Draft Community Engagement Policy

Report No. 17C0013 SJ:kl Common No. 1612461

- A. *THAT Report Number 17C0013 SJ:kl entitled Review Draft Community Engagement Policy, be received and noted.*
- B. *THAT Council endorse the Draft Policy No. 025 – Community Engagement as contained at **Attachment A** to report number 17C0013 SJ:kl entitled Review Community Engagement Policy for community engagement at the level of consult.*

DECISION NO.20\4281 (16/08/11)

Community Consultation Policy

Report No. 11TC0047 MB:as (16/08/11) Common No. 1612461

- C. *THAT Report Number 11TC0047 MB:as entitled Community Consultation Policy, be received and noted.*
- D. *THAT Council rescinds Council Policy 025, dated 23/02/10*
- E. *THAT Council adopts the Council Policy 025 Community Consultation Policy, as amended to reinforce the role of Elected Members, contained in **Attachment B** to report number 11TC0047 MB:as.*

DISCUSSION

The Community Engagement Policy provides a consistent approach to harness the benefits that can be provided through community engagement. The Policy includes principles and levels of engagement that will underpin Council processes.

Benefits of Community Engagement

- Allows community to have a say (basic democratic right)
- Improves decision making processes by providing Council a wider source of expertise, perspectives, and ideas
- Greater understanding of community expectations for services and policies
- Some problems and opportunities are so complex that we need the community to be part of finding a way forward
- It builds trust with the community and improves organisation's reputation
- It can save money – good community engagement requires time and money, but poor engagement can cost a lot more
- Mitigate or reduces project risk factors
- Creates greater ownership and support of projects by the community
- Improves community understanding of issues behind decision making process and the related constraints or opportunities

Policy Review and Development

The following steps have been undertaken in the review and update of the Policy:

- Literature review
- Review of other Council's engagement policies
- Council Workshop
- Individual consultation with Senior Managers
- Whole staff consultation
- Presented to ELT
- Council endorsement for community consultation
- Community consultation

Next steps:

- Final Council endorsement

The main changes to the policy include:

- The 'Levels of Engagement' have changed to add in a fourth level of 'discuss'. We are often delivering community engagement on projects that require more than 'informing' but we aren't actually 'consulting'. An example of this is the 'Smith St Shared Zone' project. The project was going ahead but we didn't just 'inform', we held a lot of meetings with stakeholders to ensure they understood the project, and we worked together to work out the best way for construction to occur with minimal impact. It also allowed them to inform us of any relevant factors that needed to be considered.

- There have been changes to the Principles of engagement which have been informed by the Council Workshop and staff feedback.

Community Consultation

The draft Community Engagement Policy was presented to the community for consultation between 29 May and 19 June 2017.

The following methods were used to promote the community consultation process:

- City of Darwin eNewsletter
- Social Media
- NT News One Page Ad
- City of Darwin website with survey
- Emails sent to networks and stakeholders

Attachment C provides the feedback received. There were 10 responses to the survey, with all respondents supportive of the policy objectives and principles.

Key feedback from the consultation includes:

Feedback	Response
How are you going to ensure all these things occur?	City of Darwin staff are responsible for ensuring Council policy is adhered to. A key initiative which will assist to embed the policy and engagement principles across the organisation is the development of a Community Engagement Toolkit which is underway. This Toolkit will support staff in delivery of community engagement and include resources, templates, methods and tools, and evaluation methodology.
The policy needs to be part of the daily life of each of the members and staff	As above, the Community Engagement Toolkit will work towards embedding community engagement across the organisation.
Add consult the community before any major decisions are made	Community consultation will be considered in project planning and decision making. The decision as to whether to consult or not is based on the impact the decisions have on the community and when community input can improve and influence decisions, policy and services. At times some decisions are not able to be changed or influenced by the community due to constraints such as legal requirements or technical requirements, and therefore consulting is not always viable or beneficial.

Open and honest seems hard to monitor. I have heard many employees write Council reports not to include all relevant information so that it can't be seen negatively by the community	It is an important responsibility of Council Officers to ensure the information being provided is open and honest. Council have dedicated community engagement staff that provide a service to the rest of the organisation to advise and assist with delivery of community engagement, this also helps to ensure an objective delivery of community engagement.
Value is an individual interpretation and must be considered when evaluating engagement level	Agreed.
More consultation with the community is needed	The revised Policy aims to support effective engagement with the community in planning and decision making. As described above, further work is being undertaken to support all staff with including community engagement in their practices.

CONSULTATION PROCESS

In preparing this report, the following City of Darwin officers were consulted:

- All staff

POLICY IMPLICATIONS

Each Council Policy is required to be reviewed once in the term of each Council. The existing Council Policy 025 Community Consultation was last reviewed in 2011 and will be superseded by the updated policy once the review is complete.

BUDGET AND RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

Nil

RISK/LEGAL/LEGISLATIVE IMPLICATIONS

This policy ensures a consistent and committed approach to community engagement. Poor community engagement can lead to uninformed decision making, community back lash and failure of projects.

ENVIRONMENTAL IMPLICATIONS

Nil

COUNCIL OFFICER CONFLICT OF INTEREST DECLARATION

We the Author and Approving Officers declare that we do not have a Conflict of Interest in relation to this matter.

**SHEREE JEEVES
SENIOR COMMUNITY
ENGAGEMENT OFFICER**

**ANNA MALGORZEWICZ
GENERAL MANAGER
COMMUNITY & CULTURAL
SERVICES**

For enquiries, please contact Sheree Jeeves on 89300197 or email:
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Attachments:

Attachment A: Current Policy 025 Community Consultation

Attachment B: Community Consultation Feedback

Attachment C: Updated Policy 025 Community Engagement

Current Policy

Title: Community Consultation Policy

Policy No: 025

Adopted By: Council

Next Review Date: 16/08/2015

Responsibility: Chief Executive Officer

Document Number: 2119800

Version	Decision Number	Adoption Date	History
1	20\2501	23/02/2010	Adopted
2	20\4281	16/08/2011	Amendment Adopted
3			
4			

1 Policy Summary

Community consultation allows Council access to wider sources of information, points of view and potential solutions. It gives the community a better understanding of the issues behind the decision making process and the related constraints or opportunities that exist.

City of Darwin has a standing commitment to effectively consult with its community. Council's Community Consultation Policy is executed through communication, awareness, participation and inclusion.

The level of community consultation undertaken relates directly to the nature, complexity and impact of the issue, plan or strategy.

This Policy provides the framework for community involvement in Council's planning and decision making.

2 Policy Objectives

Council aims to:

- Provide good governance by supporting and establishing open, equitable, and purposeful consultation with the community;
- Encourage active community participation by encouraging involvement and inclusion.
- Provide a framework for community involvement in Council planning and decision making; and

Policy

- Promote Council decision making which is open transparent, responsive and accountable to the community.

3 Background

City of Darwin is committed to open, accountable and responsive decision making, which is informed by effective communication and consultation between the Council and the community.

Elected members maintain a close contact with the community, and keep Council informed of real experiences and views of residents within the municipality.

Council believes it is important to consider the views of a community when making decisions about projects and resources that affect their local area or the city as a whole.

Community consultation complements, but does not replace, the decision making role of Council.

4 Policy Statement

This Policy has been informed by the International Association for Public Participation (IAP2) products for public participation processes.

City of Darwin recognises that community consultation and participation processes are a vital part of local democracy. Effective consultation is critical to good governance.

Council is committed to open, accountable and responsive decision making, which is informed by effective communication and consultation between Council and the community.

Community consultation is a two-way process, providing opportunities to clarify information, raise issues, discuss ideas, options and views.

Consultation processes identified in this Policy should be seen as complementing any prescribed statutory requirements.

In circumstances where the level of involvement requires members of the public to make submissions to Council, all submissions received will be regarded as public information and available for general access unless the writer specifically requests that they want their personal details to be suppressed.

5 The Principles

The City of Darwin Community Consultation Policy is underpinned by the following principles:

- The community will be involved in and informed about key decisions that may affect them.
- Consultation will be structured to maintain a focus on the issue/s being addressed.
- The Council will identify potential stakeholders in each specific circumstance.
- The Council will ensure information is easily understood and accessible to identified stakeholders, and will include contact details for obtaining further information in all communications.
- A range of appropriate opportunities will be provided for people to access information and to be involved, taking account of barriers due to language, disability or cultural issues.
- The Council will listen to community views and take into account all submissions made by various stakeholders
- The best interests of the community will prevail over the individual or vested interests.
- The Council's desire to balance community views and interests with other influences such as budgetary constraints.

6 Consultation Categories

The Community Consultation Policy specifies three levels designed to suit all consultation requirements, ranging from the most basic public notification, to seeking input on a major project or issue of communitywide significance.

Most important however is the realisation that each participation level involves a promise made to the public.

- **Level 1** – we will keep you informed.
- **Level 2** – we will keep you informed, listen to and acknowledge concerns and provide feedback on how public input influenced the decision.
- **Level 3** – we will work to ensure that your concerns and aspirations are directly reflected in the alternatives developed and provide feedback on how the public influenced the decision.

Where there is no statutory requirement for consultation, selection of the appropriate level will determine the resources to be allocated for consultation.

A certain degree of flexibility is required to suit the community consultation for specific situations. While setting out minimum standards, each activity level reflects this need by not being too prescriptive.

Policy

The applicant will meet the costs of any community consultation associated with the proposed commercial use or changes to a commercial use of any Council land or facility, excluding those permitted by other Council policies.

The following list indicates which level may apply for certain activities. Clearly, according to community interest and perception at the time, the appropriate level can change and so the following list indicates only which level is more likely to apply to certain activities. These are examples only and should not be regarded as comprehensive.

EXAMPLES

Level 1 - inform	Level 2 - consult	Level 3 - participate
<p>Elected members provide community leadership and guidance, and facilitate communication between the community and the council.</p>	<p>Elected members provide community leadership and guidance, and facilitate communication between the community and the council.</p>	<p>Elected members provide community leadership and guidance, and facilitate communication between the community and the council.</p>
<p>City wide</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Changes to dates, times and venues to Council and Committee meetings • Changes to Council operating hours • Temporary closure to Council facilities. 	<p>City wide</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Municipal Plan • Major upgrade to Council facilities. • Regional -Playground – installation / removal of equipment • Permanent road closures 	<p>City wide</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strategic Plan • Major Projects • Review of representation, Council boundaries and amalgamation. • By-laws • Sale of Council facility
<p>Techniques - timeframe</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No minimum period required • Compliance with statutory requirements (if any) • Council's website • Advertisement in local media • A letter box drop may be done as well as, or instead of advertising. • Social media tools • Consider submissions made in response. 	<p>Techniques - timeframe</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Allow a minimum three weeks for response • Compliance with statutory requirements (if any) • Council's website • Advertisement in local media • Media release, • A letter box drop may be done as well as, or instead of press advertising. • Public comment • Focus groups • Surveys • Social media tools • Copies of major reports/plans made available in the libraries and customer service areas. • Report to Council summarising submissions for formal Council decision. 	<p>Techniques - timeframe</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Minimum six weeks response • Compliance with statutory requirements (if any) • Council's website • Advertisement in local media • Media release and/or briefings • Newsletter articles and specific publication to all residents • Workshops • Focus groups • Community Forums • Displays/notice boards • Surveys • Social media tools • Council publications • Copies of major reports/plans made available in the libraries and customer service centres. • Report to Council summarising submissions for formal Council decision.

Level 1 - inform	Level 2 - consult	Level 3 - participate
Elected members provide community leadership and guidance, and facilitate communication between the community and the council.	Elected members provide community leadership and guidance, and facilitate communication between the community and the council.	Elected members provide community leadership and guidance, and facilitate communication between the community and the council.
Neighbourhood	Neighbourhood	Neighbourhood
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Notice of works. • Change of parking restrictions. • Traffic management proposal 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Local streetscape proposal. • Local Playground installation. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lighting of sporting ovals. • Lighting of public spaces
Technique - timeframe	Technique - timeframe	Technique - timeframe
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Compliance with statutory requirements (if any). • Letter of advice to affected properties, or properties within 250m of site, as appropriate. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Minimum 3 weeks for response • Compliance with statutory requirements (if any). • Letter or survey to affected properties, or properties within 250m of site, as appropriate. • Copies of major reports/plans made available in the libraries and customer service areas. • Report to Council summarising submissions for formal Council decision. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Minimum 6 weeks for response • Compliance with statutory requirements (if any). • Letter or survey to affected properties, or properties within 500m of site, as appropriate. • Neighbourhood forums. • Copies of major reports/plans made available in the libraries and customer service areas. • Report to Council summarising submissions for formal Council decision.

City of Darwin's public consultation process will be complemented by:

- Continued community participation on Advisory Committees.
- Elected members maintain a close contact with the community and keep Council informed of real experiences and views of residents within the municipality.
- Open forum public question times immediately prior to 2nd Ordinary Council Meeting.
- A mix of web based applications, public phone-ins (hotlines), questionnaires, social media and professional surveys, as appropriate.
- Information packages consisting of information sheets, brochures and pamphlets.

7 Legislation, terminology and references

In a number of areas the Council is required to comply with specific legislative requirements – such as minimum periods, publication in the newspaper.

Consultation processes identified in this Policy should be seen as complementing any prescribed statutory requirements.

8 Implementation and delegation

The Policy will apply to Council Elected Members, staff, contractors, and agents or consultants acting on behalf of the Council.

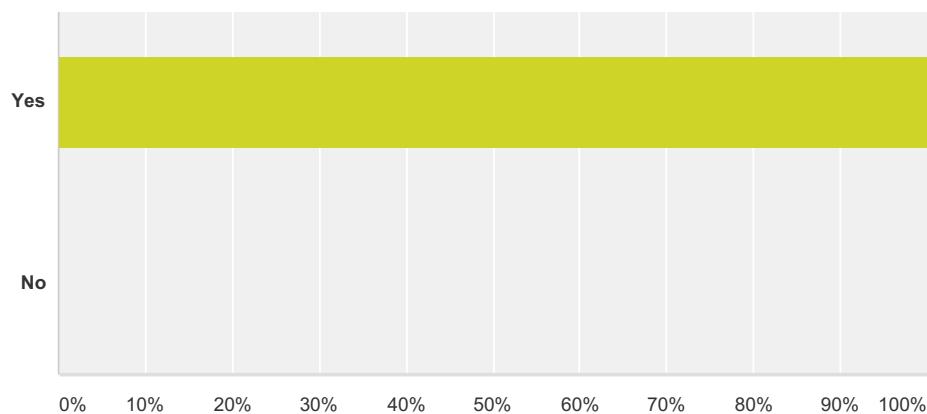
The Chief Executive Officer will be responsible for implementation of the Policy.

9 Evaluation and review

This Policy will be reviewed once during the term of the Council.

Q1 The objectives of the Community Engagement Policy are to build the organisation's capacity to:- Better serve the community by understanding and valuing their needs, aspirations and knowledge- Deliver efficient and effective outcomes for the community through better, more informed planning, policy development and decision making- Build trust and positive relationships with the community and stakeholdersDo you support the objectives?

Answered: 10 Skipped: 0

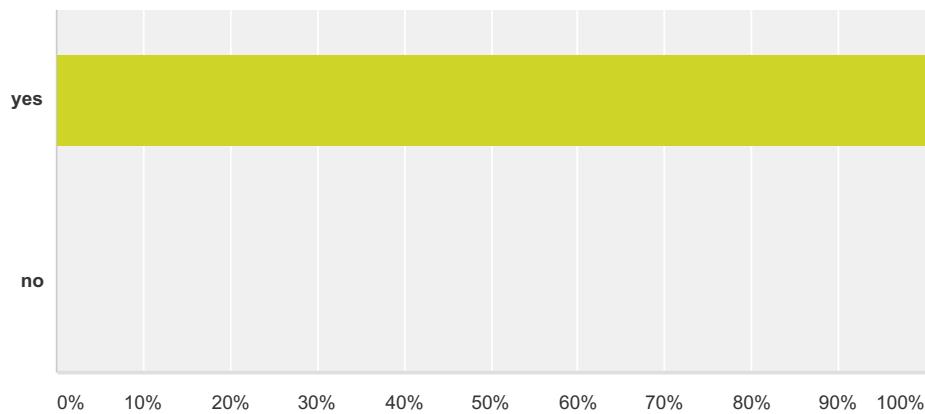


Answer Choices	Responses
Yes	100.00% 10
No	0.00% 0
Total	10

#	Comment	Date
1	Council sole purpose is to serve the community	6/6/2017 11:25 AM
2	I think the Council is doing a very good job	6/3/2017 11:32 AM
3	Yes and add consult the community before any decisions are made. eg. remove our roundabout and put lights on the corner of Daly and Smith Street	5/31/2017 9:26 AM

Q2 The following Principles will underpin the City of Darwin community engagement: Open, honest and transparent Listen and be responsive Clarity Timely Good communication Inclusive, accessible and equitable Accountable Impartial and objective Professional and reputable The Policy provides more information on each Principle. Do you support the community engagement principles?

Answered: 10 Skipped: 0



Answer Choices	Responses	
yes	100.00%	10
no	0.00%	0
Total		10

#	Comment	Date
1	how are you going to ensure all things things occur?	6/19/2017 10:05 AM
2	The Policy needs to be part of the daily life of each of the members and staff	6/6/2017 11:25 AM
3	Requests I have made to the Council have been dealt with immediately	6/3/2017 11:32 AM
4	add CONSULT the community before any major decisions are made	5/31/2017 9:26 AM

**Q3 Do you have any other feedback on the
Draft Community Engagement Policy?**

Answered: 6 Skipped: 4

#	Responses	Date
1	open and honest seems hard to monitor. i have heard many employees write council reports not to include all relevant information so that it cant be seen negatively by the community.	6/19/2017 10:05 AM
2	None as of this moment.	6/7/2017 9:23 PM
3	nil	6/6/2017 11:25 AM
4	no	6/3/2017 11:32 AM
5	Value is an individual interpretation and must be considered when evaluating engagement level	5/31/2017 9:27 AM
6	More consultation with the community is needed.	5/31/2017 9:26 AM

Updated Policy

Title: Community Engagement

Policy No: 025

Adopted By: Council

Next Review Date: Review Date

Responsibility: General Manager Community & Cultural Services

Document Number:

Version	Decision Number	Adoption Date	History
1	2012501	23/02/2010	Adopted
2	2014281	16/08/2011	Amendment Adopted
3			

1 Policy Summary

City of Darwin is committed to open, transparent and responsive community engagement. This policy will guide the delivery of community engagement processes across the organisation to better inform planning, decision making, policy development and service delivery.

2 Policy Objectives

The Community Engagement Policy aims to build the organisation's capacity to:

- Better serve the community by understanding and valuing their needs, aspirations and knowledge
- Deliver efficient and effective outcomes for the community through better, more informed planning, policy development and decision making
- Build trust and positive relationships with the community and stakeholders

3 Background

Community engagement is a planned process with the specific purpose of working across organisations, stakeholders and communities to shape the decisions or actions of the members of the community, stakeholders or organisation in relation to a problem, opportunity or outcome (*International Association for Public Participation, 2014*).

Council is committed to engaging with the community to inform effective planning, policy development and decision making processes to best serve the Darwin community.

Policy

4 Policy Statement

A core principle of good governance is involving the community in decision making. City of Darwin is committed to engaging with the community to provide the opportunity for input and understanding of decision making processes, policy development and service delivery. Council values the involvement of the community to deliver better outcomes for the community.

Why will we engage?	To build positive relationships with our stakeholders and community and seek their input to improve our decision making and deliver better services to the community.
When will we engage?	We will work to embed an organisational culture of Community Engagement. Engagement is important when our decisions or activities impact on the community and when community input can improve our decisions, policy and services.
How will we engage?	Our level and methods of engagement will vary according to the decision, program or activity and the purpose of the engagement.

Principles

The following principles will underpin City of Darwin community engagement:

Open, honest and transparent: be open, honest and transparent about the process, what can be achieved and how decisions will be made.

Listen and be responsive: commitment to listen to the community, take on board feedback and use accordingly.

Clarity: ensure clarity of goals, purpose, and what the community and stakeholders can have influence over.

Timely: engage with people at the appropriate time, take the time that is required, and work within timeframes.

Good communication: provide all the information required for the community to provide feedback that's relevant and informed.

Inclusive, accessible and equitable: provide opportunities for everyone to participate and ensure all views are respected.

Accountable: provide feedback on the outcomes of the consultation and how the community's input influenced decisions.

Impartial and objective: ensure the engagement process is delivered with an impartial view of the desired outcome or decision.

Policy

Professional and reputable: deliver the engagement process professionally supported by trained people.

Levels of Engagement

Council acknowledges that people don't want to be engaged on everything. Generally, a person's expectation of engagement increases with the level of impact it has on them. While it's important to provide people with input to important decisions it's also just as important not to waste their time on issues that are trivial, irrelevant or that they have no influence over. The level of community engagement undertaken will relate to the nature, complexity and impact of the issue, plan or strategy.

The following engagement levels are designed to suit varying engagement requirements and provide the community with an understanding of what to expect from each level of engagement. Throughout a community engagement process these levels will often complement and overlap each other.

Level	Inform (tell)	Discuss (create understanding)	Consult (ask)	Involve (work together)
What it means	One way – provides information	Two way – creates shared understanding. Work with community and stakeholders to explain and implement a decision to get the best possible outcome for all involved.	Listen to understand and learn from local knowledge. Obtaining feedback on different options, plans or proposals.	Involving people and working together to understand all needs and concerns. Work with the community in the development of options, solutions and plans.
When to use	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • When a routine decision has been made • Opposition is unlikely • There is no opportunity to influence the outcome 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • When a decision has been made but work with community/stakeholders to explain and ensure the best delivery of the decision • To understand and resolve any impacts of the delivery of a decision or project 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Before making a decision, to understand and learn • When final decisions are being shaped 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Before a complex or important decision is made • When a collaborative approach will get the best outcomes • There is a high level of interest
Timeframe	Recommended minimum 1 week	Minimum 2 weeks	Minimum 3 weeks	Minimum 6 weeks

Policy

The planning and design of community engagement processes will consider the appropriate timing, reach, methods and materials based on the goals and objectives of the process. This policy will be supported by a Community Engagement Toolkit which will include a procedure, stakeholder register, engagement methods, templates and evaluation requirements to support a consistent approach to community engagement across the organisation.

In circumstances where the level of involvement requires members of the public to make submissions to Council, all submissions received will be regarded as public information and available for general access unless the writer specifically requests that they want their personal details to be suppressed.

5 Legislation, terminology and references

Local Government Act

IAP2 Australasia, 2014, Engagement Essentials, Australia

City of Darwin is a corporate member of the International Association for Public Participation (IAP2) and this policy has been informed by its public participation processes.

6 Implementation and delegation

The City of Darwin Elected Members and staff will adopt the following roles and responsibilities to ensure that the Community Engagement Policy is implemented.

Elected Members will as stated by the *Local Government Act*:

- Represent the interests of all residents and ratepayers of the council area
- Facilitate communication between the members of the council's constituency and the council

The Chief Executive Officer will:

- Provide leadership to further embed an organisational culture of Community Engagement
- Advocate and be a spokesperson for good practice engagement

General/Executive Managers will:

- Lead their Department to further embed a culture of Community Engagement
- Appropriately resource Community Engagement projects

7 Evaluation and review

This Policy will be reviewed once during the term of Council.